



## W&M ScholarWorks

---

Undergraduate Honors Theses

Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects

---

4-2014

# One State, One People, One Language: A Comparison of Chinese and Soviet Language Policy in the 20th Century

Rachel Faith

*College of William and Mary*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses>



Part of the [Chinese Studies Commons](#), and the [Slavic Languages and Societies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Faith, Rachel, "One State, One People, One Language: A Comparison of Chinese and Soviet Language Policy in the 20th Century" (2014). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 85.

<https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses/85>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@wm.edu](mailto:scholarworks@wm.edu).

**One State, One People, One Language:  
A Comparison of Chinese and Soviet Language Policy in the 20th Century**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in  
Global Studies and Chinese Language and Literature from  
The College of William and Mary

by

Rachel Faith

Accepted for

---

(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

---

Alexander Prokhorov, Director

---

Frederick Corney

---

Elena Prokhorova

Williamsburg, VA  
April 23, 2014

## **Table of Contents**

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	4
History of Reform.....	21
The Case of the Mongolian Language.....	50
Introduction to the Mongolian Language.....	50
The Mongolian People’s Republic and Soviet Language Policy.....	53
The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and Chinese Language Policy.....	61
Comparisons and Implications.....	68
Conclusion.....	75
Works Cited.....	80

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this thesis:

The poor, good-intentioned people who asked me “What is your thesis about?” and then had to listen to me ramble ad nauseam about nationalism, *pinyin*, and Mongolia. Your patience and show of interest has not gone unappreciated.

Lisa Grimes, for her patience and flexibility in the face of my inability to turn anything in on time.

Fred Corney, for providing a thorough and helpful critique of the first chapter of this paper. You have turned this thesis up to 11.

Elena Prokhorova, for helping me figure out what methodology is, reviewing my presentation for the Honors Colloquium, and helping me determine the direction of the latter half of this paper.

Alexander Prokhorov, for advising me in my study of Russian, my travels to Russia, and the creation of this paper. You have handled my odd assortment of interests, strange styles of organization, and ridiculously long sentences with unfailing patience and understanding. Your guidance and support were essential for the successful completion of this thesis, as well as for my continued sanity.

Roy Chan, for being my main advisor and putting tremendous amounts of time and effort toward this project, in spite of being on the other side of the country. You are the only other person I have ever met who is as crazy about both Russian and Chinese as I am. This project would not have happened without you.

## **Introduction**

Two of the most monumental state-building projects of the 20th century were the creations of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. These two countries rose out of the remains of overthrown imperial histories with the intention of uniting vast numbers of people across enormous geographical spaces in the creation of new socialist states. In this state-building process, the policy makers of these countries also undertook language planning programs which, like the states they helped to build, stood unrivaled in the 20th century in terms of scope, complexity, and the number of people they affected and continue to affect. While issues of language may not be the first things that come to mind when one thinks of socialism or state-building, the obstacles which language posed and the opportunities which its careful shaping and development could provide were of great importance to the state-building efforts in the USSR and PRC. Both regions faced communication and administration issues which took their root in extensive linguistic diversity over huge geographic areas, as well as tasks of state building and forming a unified socialist identity in the face of tremendous ethnic diversity. In line with Michael Gorham's argument in his monograph *Speaking in Soviet Tongues* that recent trends in the sociology of language have come to link language with issues of power and authority, this thesis argues that the cultural administrators in the Soviet Union and the PRC approached language culture and development with the intention of using it as a means of state building. Both states recognized the power inherent in the development of literacy and the control of linguistic and ideological identity, and moved to harness these powers to aid them in building unified socialist states.

Although Chinese and Russian are now the common languages of government, education, and commerce in the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and a significant portion of the former Soviet Union, the development of Russian and Chinese language policy in these spaces did not

begin simply as a question of which language would constitute the best *lingua franca* for the USSR and the Republic (soon to be People's Republic) of China. Rather, it served as a weapon in the battle between nationalism and socialism within the context of modern state building. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the age of feudal empires was coming to an end, and nation-states with colonial extensions were beginning to become the primary world powers; the first several decades of the 20th century saw the final collapse of the great Ottoman Empire and the division of Europe into the states with which we are now familiar. Russia and China were not exempt from this shift away from imperialism<sup>1</sup>; Tsar Nikolai II's abdication of the Russian throne in 1917 ended Russia's imperial era that had begun with Peter the Great almost 300 years earlier, and the transformation of imperial Qing China into the Republic of China signified not only the end of an almost 400-year-old dynasty, but the end of an empire which had existed in various forms for almost 2000 years. In both cases, the end of imperialism signified a major turning point in administrative style in vast territories, and the question facing the new governments in both former empires was how they would organize, unify, and identify themselves from now on.

Nationalism was one possibility which presented itself in both Russia and China. For China, it was in fact a very formidable force, and the nationalist party of the Guomindang (sometimes spelled Kuomintang) spent most of China's Republican era on equal, if not superior, footing when compared to the Communist party. Although the Guomindang was originally founded in 1894 (at that time called the Revive China Society) to overthrow the Qing Dynasty, the blossoming of nationalism in China during the 20th century can be seen as a response to the aggressive colonialism of foreign powers, most notably Japan, entering China and trying to split the country. Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Guomindang, sought

---

<sup>1</sup> I use imperialism in reference to the age of empires, and not within V.I. Lenin's definition of the highest stage of capitalism's evolution leading up to socialist revolution (Lenin, "Imperialism...").

to combat the encroaching imperialism through *minzu zhuyi*, one of the three main principles of the Guomindang. *Minzu zhuyi* is most often translated as nationalism, and Sun's goal was to create a united Chinese national identity that superseded all ethnic identities in order to unite China against the Japanese and other foreign imperialist powers.

In 1921 the Chinese Communist Party emerged with a competing supranational ideology and narrative about the former empire's social and economic management. Although the Communists started as a left wing of the Guomindang and initially coexisted well with their nationalist companions, no doubt due at least in part to the shared interest in fighting Japanese imperialism, they experienced tension when the conservative Chiang Kai-shek came to power after the death of Sun in 1925 and began to marginalize the communists. He eventually turned on them in 1927, and from this point onward the Communist party and the nationalists of the Guomindang opposed each other up until the eventual victory of the Communists over the nationalist government and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The split was based in more than just the betrayal in 1927, though; the two groups, once different ends of the same party, had come to differ ideologically to a great extent. The Guomindang, although supporting ideas of Chinese nationalism, had been organized along Leninist lines in the early 1920s after Sun had turned to the Soviets for aid in 1921. While this ideological stance would have sat well with the Leninist Communist faction of the Guomindang, Chiang's right-wing stance diverged greatly from the principles of the Communists. To better understand this ideological split, it is important to look at the views of Lenin and Russian communists, especially concerning their attitude toward nationalism and its dangers.

While nationalism served as a strong mobilizing force in China and as an initial aid to the Chinese Communists, socialists in the Russian Empire had a more hostile attitude toward nationalism. In the eyes

of those seeking to replace the empire with a Marxist socialist state, nationalism was indeed a mobilizing force, but a dangerous one. It could lead to above-class alliances between the proletariat and the bourgeois in pursuit of national goals, and would serve as a masking ideology that would obscure class-related goals and the development of socialism with the appeal of national development (Martin 69). Lenin railed against it on multiple occasions, saying in his “Critical Remarks on the National Question” : “But every nation also possesses a bourgeois culture (and most nations a reactionary and clerical culture as well) in the form, not merely of ‘elements’, but of the ‘dominant culture’. Therefore, the general ‘national culture’ is the culture of the landlords, the clergy and the bourgeoisie.” Instead of this "bourgeois nationalism," Lenin and other socialists favored "proletarian internationalism" (Lenin, “Critical...”). Furthermore, nationalism could have no place in a socialist society because one of the ultimate goals of socialism was to transcend nationalism and all other forms of identification through the creation of a new socialist identity for all citizens. To endorse nationalism as a form of state building seemed like a step backwards.

Another issue of nationalism that was particularly clear to socialists living in the Russian Empire was the violence it could produce. In the years leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917, Europe had been tearing itself apart in World War I, a war that was started on and fueled by nationalist claims. Nationalism provided tinder on which the aggressive sparks of national self-assertion could easily be fanned into a full blaze. Considering the number ethnic groups of the former Russian empire that could possibly decide to assert themselves as a nationality, trying to build a new nation in this space based off of nationalist principles seemed like a perfect way to burn the new socialist society to the ground before it could even be properly built.

Even beyond the chaos that could come from minority nationalities within the empire clashing as



they established themselves as nations, Russian nationalism in the face of other national groups was particularly dangerous for creating a unified socialist state out of the old empire. Many non-Russian ethnicities resented Great Russian chauvinism and the oppression that came with such attitudes, and rallying ethnic Russians around nationalism in order to mobilize them to build the new state would likely drive other ethnic groups away and inspire them to use their own nationalism to combat Russian nationalism. Focusing on the Russians at the expense of other ethnic groups was not something that the socialists could afford to do. Lenin proposed proletarian internationalism as a ideology with a worldwide appeal for the working masses and the supranational alternative to nationalist ideology. Moreover, many Russian socialists felt that Russia was too backwards to build real socialism on its own, and that Russia's best chance for success in a socialist future was to establish its own base and then focus on aiding the development of socialism in other countries. Therefore, it would not make sense to drive large sections of the empire away and let them develop into a non-socialist state, as it would only make fewer allies for socialist Russia and would leave more places where socialism would have to be developed from the ground up by Russia in the future.

In the end, the Soviet communists articulated a new type of state which Terry Martin calls an affirmative action empire (78). This, in some ways, looked surprisingly like nationalism. Various ethnic groups were allowed to create their own republics or autonomous regions within the Soviet Union, and were encouraged to express and promote their own language, culture, and national identity, and at times even at the expense of Russian culture's and language's dominant status. Martin notes that the Bolsheviks viewed this polity as a transitional state formation. This was not the Bolsheviks giving up on their goal of transcendent socialism, but rather using a less direct route to get to it. The plan was to fight fire with fire, or rather, nationalism with nationalism (72-74).

To begin with, there was a world revolution to be fought before a socialist state could be built, and the Bolsheviks needed support. By supporting minority nationalities and their right to self-determination, the Bolsheviks were able to get these nationalities on their side and use the mobilizing power of nationalism to their benefit (Martin 68). Beyond the need for support, Lenin and Stalin both agreed that "national consciousness was an unavoidable historic phase that all peoples must pass through on the way to internationalism," and so as it seemed that nationalism must be dealt with in any case before international socialism could be achieved, they might as well employ it to destroy itself on the way through this phase of national consciousness. Forms of nationalism that did not supersede or interfere with the creation of a central unified state would be embraced; such forms could include national languages, elites, cultures, and even autonomous territories within the greater state (Martin 73). This would hopefully diffuse the mistrust that had been built against Russian imperialism and chauvinism, and develop the support gained for the revolution into long-term trust. Lenin even claimed that the nationalism of oppressed nations was justified considering their position as oppressed, and even had a certain sort of democracy to it. It was more so the nationalism of oppressor nations that needed to be avoided (Martin 71). The result of this all would be a union of socialist republics that, although national in form, would be socialist in content, a stepping stone en route to the world revolution. The Bolsheviks would be able to take advantage of the mobilizing capacity of nationalism, and by actively addressing national needs and desires of minority groups, would be stripping it of its power to distract these groups with above-class alliances and goals. With the bomb of nationalism defused, the central state structure could then focus on the socialist content of their nationalist republics. Such content would eventually lead citizens to the ideal state of transcendent socialist identity in which nationalism would cease to exist, thus erasing the problem entirely. It was with this in mind that Soviet policy makers of all fields began

building the new state, and when China's turn for socialist state building came around in 1949, they followed in the footsteps of the Soviets.

It is in this dance between socialism and nationalism that language and state-led language policy became a concern for intellectuals, politicians, and linguists alike in the Soviet Union and China. The main goal of language policy in both the Soviet Union and China was literacy, and although it did not always remain the motivation behind language planning, it was consistently maintained as the desired end result of language policy throughout the history of both states. Literacy, under the definition of being able to read and write, was very low in China and the Soviet Union during the early 20th century. As of 1917 in the newly formed Soviet Union, only 28.4% of the population between ages 9-49 was literate, with illiteracy rates approaching 100% in some regions (Grenoble 35). The Chinese also faced a literacy struggle which was further exacerbated by a non-alphabetic writing system that was extremely difficult to learn. The writing system and limited education opportunities for rural, lower-class people had long limited literacy to only the uppermost levels of society. The concept of literacy is not limited to the pen and page. The other half of literacy is centered around the ability to use a language proficiently, giving literacy an oral/aural aspect which is not usually associated with the term. When striving for this sort of literacy, the struggle most often comes in trying to introduce groups or classes of people to new vocabulary which was not previously part of their lexicon, and teach them how to understand it and use it correctly.

The Soviet and Chinese states' relationships with literacy were complex, as the benefits of high literacy rates were numerous and varied. One very appealing aspect of literacy was the prestige it held in the modern world. Literacy was power; it was crucial for the much desired realization of industrialization and modernization, especially in that it would create a better educated, and therefore

more effective, workforce. Certain aspects of technology and industrial production would in turn bring new words to describe them, and this demanded a workforce whose grasp of language encompassed these new terms; therefore the issue of literacy when connected to industrialization was mainly an issue of language proficiency. Industrialization, widespread education, and literacy all implied modernness, and were part of what would make a state legitimate in the eyes of other world powers. It was therefore important for the legitimacy of the Soviet and Chinese states that they quickly develop a literate educated workforce, especially in light of how rural and industrially underdeveloped both of these states were compared to their Western European and Japanese counterparts.

Another aspect of socialist state development which required linguistic attention was the introduction of the new political thought on which the state was to be based. After the revolution in the Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks faced a huge chasm in language use, education, and ideology between the new Marxist leadership and the predominantly peasant population<sup>2</sup>. The Bolsheviks had worked mainly in small intellectual circles leading up to the revolution and spoke the language of educated, literate intellectuals, a language which was quite different than the one the illiterate, uneducated peasants were using. The Bolsheviks also spoke the language of Marxism and revolution, a language which was filled with loan words and new terms for political concepts that had only recently been introduced to Russian thought and language. The peasants understood neither the thought nor the language of Marxism, but as their participation in and understanding of the new socialist state was central to this state's success, the Bolsheviks could not continue to leave the peasants in the political and linguistic dark. This gap between the language of urban revolutionary leaders and the language of the rural people they were trying to bring into their new socialist state existed in China as well, and was further

---

<sup>2</sup> See the first chapter of Michael Gorham's *Speaking in Soviet Tongues* for a more in-depth discussion of this issue.

complicated by dialect differences across the countryside. Much in the way that peasants and workers needed to understand the new language of industry for the industrial aspects of the state to flourish, they also needed to understand the ideological language of the state in order for the new socialist state to accomplish its ideological project. This, much like literacy in relation to industrialization, demanded political language proficiency, the expanding of the lexicon of the peasantry, and teaching the peasants how to use and interpret this new Marxist vocabulary correctly.

Beyond getting Russian and Chinese peasants to be proficient in the language of the revolution, literacy was necessary for the spreading of socialist ideology across the vast geographical spaces of the Soviet Union and China. For this, literacy in the sense of being able to read and write was important; while oral means of spreading information could certainly cover large distances, the information being spread was far more likely to be altered or misinterpreted along the way than if it was being transmitted in a written form. Furthermore, written transmission of information had the ability to overcome the dialect barriers present in China, as a great number of dialects whose spoken forms were mutually unintelligible could be expressed using Chinese characters in a way that was intelligible to anyone who could read. Written materials could be distributed quickly while remaining accurate, but they were of little worth if no one could read them. In some cases, a compromise could be reached between written and spoken literacy, as shown by the presence of the "living newspaper" (живая газета) in early socialist Russia; literate party members would ride trains through the countryside, stopping over at towns to read and perform the news to illiterate peasants (Gorham 11-12). While this did indeed give many people access to news they otherwise never would have had the chance to read or hear, it would have ultimately been impractical to try to use a comparatively small group of urban intellectuals to repeatedly go out and read the news to the entire Soviet Union. In states as large as the USSR and

China, print was the best way to circulate information, and in order to accommodate this, higher levels of literacy were required.

Finally, increased literacy allowed the socialist state to use printed material to shape the official language of the party state (Gorham 120-140, 159-171). The Soviet Union and PRC emerged out of revolution and upheaval, and it was crucial for their survival to create a legitimate and authoritative image of the state in the minds of the public. Printed information is convenient for such image building in that it lacks the spontaneity of spoken means of communicating news, ideas, and opinions; newspapers can be looked over and edited before being published, but a speech given to a crowd cannot be changed or erased once said. Even though a person making a speech can be stopped, the process of stopping them only draws more attention to what is going on, whereas the editing and censoring of print is silent and invisible. By promoting itself through printed media such as newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, posters, and books, the state had the ability to carefully select what was and was not to be said about it without drawing excessive attention to this editing process. Print also had the ability to affect spoken expression as well. Any event that was based around a script could be looked over and edited before it occurred, from theater and speeches at organized events to film and eventually television. Both states clearly realized the benefits to monitoring the content of printed or scripted material and using that content to the benefit of their public image; the Soviets established a censorship and state secret protection body called Glavlit in 1922, and the Chinese communists had set up its Publicity Department (中共中央宣传部) as early as 1924. This department would eventually be accompanied by the General Administrative Office of Publication (中央人民政府出版总署) in 1949. Finally, the physical and more permanent nature of print when compared to speech was useful in that printed works could be collected and analyzed. The state could not only produce information to affect the opinions of the public, but could

also gather and study the public's printed responses. Such information could enlighten the state as to what its next image building decision should be, and could then be filed away for further use. Overall, printed materials could prove tremendously useful in building and managing the official state language, and this only added to the urgency behind the drive for literacy in both China and the Soviet Union.

Beyond the appeals of literacy, however, language was still tied to a massive force which arguably provides the fuel to the nationalism that the communists were trying to undermine: the force of identity. As language is one of the most important means of communication between humans, the words a person uses to express himself are deeply tied to that person's identity, both as he defines it and as those around him define it. Classes, generations, social groups, and genders are separated by the way they speak. Language can delineate or indicate a someone's ethnic, geographic, religious, professional, and educational background, and can even offer insight to political and national inclinations. Changes in language and its use can signify changes in identity, and identity changes often lead to changes in a person's use of language; the relationship of emigres to the language of their motherland and the language of their new home can often give insight as to how much they have come to identify with their new country.

Considering the importance of a person's identity in determining their choices and actions, as well as the extensive hold which language has over identity, it would seem that to control language is to control the identity of those who speak it, at least in part. Herein lies the greatest power of language policy and planning, and the answer to the socialist state-building question with which the Soviet Union and China were faced. The communist parties of these states wanted to build new societies based on a socialist identity that would one day supersede all other forms of personal, religions, ethnic, and national identity. To do this, however, these other pre-existing and well established forms of identification had to

be demolished. What better way to remove these forms than by turning one of their core elements, language, against them? In the beginning, it would serve as a way to entice people into the system and convince them to stay; both states offered extensive protection and promotion of national languages during their early days, a stance which was extremely appealing to minority nationalities who had been repressed linguistically and culturally during the imperial era. This approach worked with the philosophy of satisfying national demands in order to diffuse the mobilizing power of nationalism. Nationalities would see and appreciate the state's respect for their identity and language, and would in turn be better able to identify with that state. However, much like the organization of the Soviet republics and the various regions of the PRC, language under the state would be nationalist in form, but socialist in content. National languages would be used to present socialist ideology to the people who spoke them, and as people came to better understand and accept this mode of thought, they would also begin to understand and accept the need to break away from their national identities and languages. After enough time, the question of languages and nationality would be gone entirely, and everyone would be expressing their socialist identity through a socialist language of the future.

To achieve this utopian future free of nationalism, however, there was a great deal of planning and development to be dealt with first, and this process of the creation and practical implementation of language policy brought with it a set of considerable problems. The first, and possibly greatest, of these was the tremendously diverse linguistic environment in which the Soviets and Chinese were working. In the USSR, no republic was monolingual. Policy makers were faced with at least about 130 ethnic groups whose 150 languages were spread across the various branches of the Indo-European, Altaic, Uralic, and Caucasian families, as well as a multitude linguistic isolates in Russia's Far East which are generally classified as Paleosiberian. While significant differences in morphology, phonetics, and syntax



between these families were not unexpected, there was a great deal of variation within each family as well, such that dialects within the same branch are often mutually unintelligible (Grenoble 8-20). China faced a very similar situation. China's north is a mix of Sino-Tibetan (Mandarin, Jin), Altaic (Mongolian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uighur, Uzbek), Indo-European (primarily Tajik and Russian), and Korean languages, and the south presents even greater linguistic fragmentation with Dai, Tibeto-Burman, Miao-Yao, Austronesian, and a variety of Sino-Tibetan languages (Wu, Xiang, Yue, Hakka, Ping, Gan, Mandarin dialects). As in the Soviet Union, there was a struggle with multifarious differences between and within language families and the abundance of mutually unintelligible dialects. In addition to the purely oral/aural struggles that the situation presented, there were numerous separate obstacles in terms of written language. While languages such as Mongolian, Uighur, Naxi, Georgian, and Armenian, amongst others, have distinct, well-developed writing systems and literary traditions, there were innumerable languages, especially across Siberia, which lacked any form of writing. Even between the languages with established writing systems, these systems were extremely different from one another.

In spite of the difficulties, both states decided to take on language as a means of state building and undermining nationalism. Although the process of developing language policy within the context of state socialism in each state is offset by about 30 years, when one looks back on the courses of Soviet and Chinese language policy, one finds that they look remarkably similar in many ways. The first decade of policy in both the USSR and the PRC are generally characterized by energetic support and development of national languages. Much of the policy focus during this time is directed toward education, literacy, and the reform of writing systems. The goals and focal points of the first decade are very much in line with the overarching goals of creating an educated and modern workforce to industrialize the country, and of diffusing the mobilizing powers of nationalism by satisfying national

demands.

Toward the end of the 1920s in the USSR and the 1950s in the PRC, however, there were starting to be noticeable shifts in policy away from national languages and towards the development of a single language to be used by the party state. Although this is certainly not the first time that such an option had come under consideration, particularly in China, it was the first time within the lives of these two socialist states that the idea of a state language was beginning to come before the interests of the nationalities. In both states, this change in policy was accompanied by a change in political climate which doubtless played a role in the policy shift. By the by 1920s in the Soviet Union, Stalin had settled into power, but as early as 1924 began developing and promoting the idea of socialism in one country. This concept was developed by Stalin in response to Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and his urgings to provoke a socialist revolution in Germany. Trotsky was amongst the internationalists who felt that Russia was too backwards to produce socialism on its own, and that the only hope for developing true, mature socialism was the creation of socialist revolutions in capitalist countries across the world (Carr 36-42). These countries, once their revolutions had succeeded, could join up and successfully build socialism together. The applicability of the theory was being questioned, though, and in response, Stalin offered an argument that socialism could in fact be successfully developed within a single country. He claimed that in light of the failure of the socialist revolutions in other European countries, the best hope for socialism was for the Soviet Union to turn its focus away from international revolution and inwards toward developing socialism within its own borders. By the late 1920s the concept of socialism in one country became state policy. This shift in thought "reawakened a vague sentiment of national pride or patriotism which had been temporarily silenced, but not destroyed, by the resounding international appeal for revolution," and in this way likely contributed to the shift away from policy that

focused on the national minorities of the Union (Carr 47).

The PRC was also facing political shifts at the end of its first decade which would contribute to changes in the course of its language policy. The two main events to be taken into account are the Sino-Soviet Split and the Great Leap Forward. The former began around 1960, when the Soviet Union and the PRC began to drift in different ideological directions. Up to this point, the structuring and governing of the PRC had been based heavily on the model which the Soviet Union had set. During the second half of the 1950s, however, the Soviet Union started dismantling the Stalinist model of socialism. Khrushchev brought in a slightly more open and relaxed political atmosphere which came to be known as the Thaw. While some saw this as a change for the better, Mao Zedong, the chairman of Chinese Communist Party, saw this as ideological defection and a betrayal of socialist ideals and the PRC by the USSR. Mao now viewed China as the main hope for the future of socialism, and began to make moves to remove revisionists from the Chinese government. These changes would culminate in the ten-year Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Although not based off of Stalin's theory directly, Mao's attitude during the Sino-Soviet Split is in some ways very similar to the concept of socialism in one country; the Soviet Union was seen by Mao as having given up on its socialist project, leaving China to turn inward and strengthen socialism within the confines of its own state in order to assure the ultimate survival and success of socialism. It is likely, then, that the Split would have had the same ability to stir nationalist sentiment and draw attention away from the development of national minorities' languages.

The other detractor from language planning for national minorities was the Great Leap Forward, which lasted from 1958 to 1961. These three years were a period of intense and rapid industrialization and collectivization throughout China, which ultimately ended in failure and famine. This period was not detrimental to language planning in that its policies directly opposed the development of national

languages, but rather in that the planning and implementation of the Great Leap Forward consumed so much time and attention that language planning in general was pushed to the side. Very few significant acts related to language policy occurred during this time, and although there was a renewed interest in language planning during the early 60s, this was again interrupted by the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Beyond the disruptive turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the fact that it was rooted in part in Mao's desire to reassert his control and power after the catastrophic results of the Great Leap Forward would have lead to an environment not conducive to the promotion of national minority rights and autonomy. The state needed to be unified under Mao, and there would be no room for objecting nationalist sentiments under this state. In any case, minority language policy never again held the importance which it was given during the 1950s, and most language policy from 1958 forward was focused on the development of a unifying party state language for the PRC.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the belief that national identities would dissolve into a greater socialist identity never became a reality. An extremely wide variety of national languages and identities still existed across the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, taking up time and resources for their development and protection, and not seeming to bring people any closer to supranational socialist identity. It seemed that the Soviet Union and PRC's attempt to destroy nationalism by temporarily accommodating it had not ultimately succeeded, and so both states turned down the path of destroying nationalism by trying to directly replace it with a new socialist identity based on the dominant language of the imperial master. In terms of language policy, this approach to state building focused on the establishment and proliferation of a single standardized language to be used state-wide. After a certain point, this standardized state language ended up being the language of the largest ethnic groups in each state: Russian and Mandarin Chinese. This lead eventually to programs of

Russification and Sinicization. Language policy aimed at minority nationalities did not disappear entirely, but it never regained its initial importance. Therefore, in the end, it appears that the USSR and PRC could not create Marxist party states free from nationalism; the nationalisms of the minorities were just traded for the nationalism of the majority, and a supranational socialist identity was never achieved.

Although the intention and goals of language policy changed over time, the technical aspects of language which language planning needed to address remained consistent. Whether they were directed at the promotion of national language or the creation of country-wide standard languages, the policies within the Soviet and Chinese language planning encompassed the full range of language: alphabets and writing systems, literary language and forms, lexicon expansion, pronunciation, spelling, standardization, and the spread of new linguistic standards and norms. Looking at when each aspect of language became important in the eyes of policy makers and what kind of policies they made to deal with these parts of language provides a clearer, more detailed picture of the Soviet and Chinese language policy arcs and can provide insight as to why and how they took the shape which they now have.

## **Chapter One: History of Reform**

Language reform policies can generally be separated into the categories of written and spoken. Due to the emphasis placed upon literacy, the written form of language was one of the first things taken into account in early language planning. Literacy rates were extremely low, and in many regions of both the USSR and the PRC, the state was confronted with languages that entirely lacked a written form in which people could become literate. In order to achieve the literacy goals that were so important to modernization, the state was going to have to take stock of all of the languages under its authority, and through either development, consolidation, or reinvention of these languages, find a way to make the people who speak them literate.

In China, it was not as much a problem of not having a writing system to work with as it was of struggling to be literate in the writing systems which already existed. Since the Chinese *hanzi* (汉字) writing system was not based around phonetic letters, but rather consisted of ideographs<sup>3</sup>, literacy required the memorization of thousands of characters, which unsurprisingly proved to be a huge obstacle for much of the population. The difficulty of the current writing system was readily apparent even to the literate, and by the end of the 19th century talk of writing reform had already begun. Most of these conversations were carried out by language scholars. When there was government support and participation, it usually came from the Ministry of Education. The general consensus among linguists of

---

<sup>3</sup> It should be made clear that Chinese characters are ideographs, and not pictographs, as they are sometimes erroneously called. Although both represent a concept without indicating a pronunciation or name for this concept, a pictograph's appearance relates to the actual appearance of the thing it depicts, whereas the ideograph does not necessarily do so. While Chinese *hanzi* system takes its roots in pictographic systems, its current form is no longer pictographic, as the appearance of the characters have little to no relation to the appearance of that which they describe. While certain visual aspects of characters, such as the radical, can provide insight to the meaning or pronunciation of the character, this meaning is gleaned from the use of that same element in other characters of similar meaning or pronunciation. An example of a true pictographic system still used in China is the Naxi writing system.

the time was that Chinese needed some sort of phonetic writing system that could make learning to read and write a faster and easier process. This collectively recognized concern, however, was floating in a sea of disagreements over the shape of this new writing system.

The first major point of disagreement was over what kind of phonetic system should be used. On one hand was the obvious choice of a roman system. Such systems had already been loosely established around 1900 by missionaries in the south of China (DeFrancis 32), and due to how many other languages used roman alphabets, the creation of such a writing system in China would make international communication much easier than it was with *hanzi*. Cyrillic was also toyed with as a possible option for phoneticising Chinese, as Russian and its Cyrillic alphabet were neighbors to China. Although the Soviets and their writing system would eventually come to have a notable influence on language planning in the PRC, Cyrillic's influence would never be as extensive as the Roman alphabet's. The other major contender for a Chinese alphabet was a system based off of Japanese kana. The argument brought forward by kana supporters was that kana was related to *hanzi*, which had previously been the only writing system in Japan and still existed as alongside kana in modern Japanese. Due to its roots, kana was likely to function much better with Chinese than an imported Western system. Furthermore, China admired Japan's military power at the time, and as they saw Japan's military capabilities as being supported and increased by literacy within Japanese troops, it is unsurprising that they would look to Japan's phonetic writing system as a place to seek inspiration for their own (DeFrancis 45).

Closely related to the debate of which phonetic system to use was the question of how to capture the unique phonetic and tonal aspects of Chinese languages with a phonetic alphabet. Roman and Cyrillic alphabets developed around languages which lacked many of the sounds used in Chinese,

and included phonetic sounds for which Chinese had no equivalent. Although drawing from a Japanese system might create an alphabet with a more suitable phonetic spread, it could not deal with the tonal aspect of Chinese any better than the Western systems. All other pros and cons of the various systems aside, it was clear that the final choice of which alphabet would serve as the base for the Chinese phonetic system would be heavily dependent upon which system could adapt best to the more unique phonetic aspects of Chinese. It was also likely that the chosen system would have to undergo some degree of modification to develop a means of expressing tones.

Next was the question of how the phonetic system would exist in relation to the current *hanzi* system. On the one hand, people such as Qian Xuantong and Fu Sinian felt it would be best to get rid of *hanzi* entirely and replace them with a new, independent phonetic alphabet (Wang 122). Scholar and Guomindang member Wu Zhihui even felt so strongly about the need to bring in what he saw as a more efficient Western system that he proposed to replace the entire Chinese language, written and spoken, with a Western language attached to a roman phonetic alphabet, such as English, French, or Esperanto (Wang 118). On the other side were those who felt that *hanzi* should continue as the main writing system; the phonetic alphabet should be used only as a pronunciation aid when learning to read and write, and not as its own freestanding writing system.

The final major question posed by creating a phonetic alphabet was where to apply it. China encompassed a vast number of different languages, some of which already used *hanzi*, some of which had their own or no writing system, and all of which were extremely different phonetically. While overarching issues of the phonetic characteristics of Chinese and the presence of tones made it difficult to decide what phonetic system to start with, the fact that phonetics and tonal systems were not at all consistent across languages within China further complicated the creation and implementation of a



phonetic system. If the system was to be one which could be used across multiple dialects and minority languages, it would most likely have to be very complex and heavily modified (in comparison to the system from which it was based) in order to accommodate the differences which existed between the languages of China. The other option was to create a system for only one language. While this would be much simpler in terms of structuring and using the system, it would complicate the process of spreading literacy. Every Chinese dialect had geographical limits, and once the new writing system left the physical limits of its dialect, it would be unintelligible. In order for a phonetic alphabet attached to a single dialect to be successful in creating nationwide literacy, everyone in the country would have to learn that dialect. This would mean not only having to choose a phonetic system to work with, but also having to determine which Chinese language would become the literary standard for the whole country. Such a decision would involve inevitable conflict between regions and ethnic groups.

As if the situation was not already complicated enough with all of the phonetic possibilities and spoken languages to which they could be attached floating about, the Chinese also had to contend with several languages which had their own established writing systems that were not related to *hanzi*, many of which were already phonetic. It was not as if these languages were particularly limited in terms of speakers and geographical regions; the languages of primary concern would have been Mongolian, Uighur, Yi, Naxi, Manchu. Particularly in terms of Mongolian, Uighur, and Manchu, these were languages which were very well established, used through large territories in conjunction with a distinct spoken language, and had some degree of political clout behind them. They would not simply be swept away without a single word of protest in order to be replaced by a foreign and engineered writing system (especially when an effective phonetic system was already in place). Even if the speakers of these languages could be convinced to use a new writing system, the extremely divergent nature of these

languages on a structural and phonetic level would most likely prohibit the use of one writing system across all of them. This, in turn, would also demand the new phonetic writing system come attached to a new spoken system, which would doubtless be even less palatable to these minority ethnicities than the writing system on its own.

In these early debates over the future of the Chinese writing system, one can already see the formation one of the most important goals of Chinese language policy in the 20th century: the creation of a national standard language which stands above all other dialects and non-Chinese languages within the state. Linguists agreed on the need for a phonetic system, but it seemed creating one which could cover multiple dialects, let alone all of them, would result in a cumbersome and overly complex system. This is not to say that the possibility of including multiple dialects under one writing system had been abandoned; during the experimentation with writing systems through the first couple decades of the 20th century, language specialists such as Lao Naixuan would attempt to make or extend pre-existing Chinese phonetic systems to cover some of the larger dialects. The attitude had been established, though, that China needed some sort of uniting linguistic element, and this attitude would persist until it became one of the main concerns of Chinese language policy under the Communists.

In the case of the Soviet Union, language planners in The People's Commissariat for Enlightenment and The People's Commissariat of the Nationalities were also facing struggles with written language after the 1917 revolution that were in some ways quite similar to those which China was grappling with (Grenoble 38). Just as in China, the path to nationwide literacy was being obstructed by linguistic diversity combined with unevenly developed writing systems. Soviet language planners faced the full range of systems, from long-standing literary traditions to an utter lack of written forms in some languages. While it was clear that something must be done to equalize the situation, the option of

picking a single language, such as Russian, to promote statewide above all others was a very precarious subject, just as the option of picking a single dialect to build a phonetic system around remained a debated subject in China. The problem of a common language was not a matter of logistics so much as a matter of political views. The Bolsheviks did not want to encourage nationalism or chauvinism by elevating one language above all others. Lenin himself had claimed in his 1913 "Critical Remarks on the National Question" that imposing the supremacy of one language was not the way to go about handling the struggles of a multilingual state, saying:

Why should 'huge' Russia, a much more varied and terribly backward country, inhibit her development by the retention of any kind of privilege for any one language?...Should not Russia, if she wants to overtake Europe, put an end to every kind of privilege as quickly as possible, as completely as possible and as vigorously as possible? If all privileges disappear, if the imposition of any one language ceases, all Slavs will easily and rapidly learn to understand each other and will not be frightened by the "horrible" thought that speeches in different languages will be heard in the common parliament. The requirements of economic exchange will themselves decide which language of the given country it is to the advantage of the majority to know in the interests of commercial relations. This decision will be all the firmer because it is adopted voluntarily by a population of various nationalities, and its adoption will be the more rapid and extensive the more consistent the democracy...(Lenin, "Remarks...")

He goes on to use Switzerland as an example of how to successfully manage a multiethnic, multilingual state without having to limit the linguistic rights of any one group or sacrifice political and economic efficiency. In any case, the ultimate goal was for all nationalities to eventually set aside their individual languages and ethnic identities, and move on to a higher Socialist identity, making the conflict

between and promotion of different languages unimportant in the long run. This sort of cultural melding was to be aided by the fact that equality between nationalities and languages would diffuse nationalistic tension and naturally bring people of different national backgrounds together (Grenoble 35-36).

Furthermore, there were specific issues associated with using Russian for the common language. At first glance, it was the most logical choice due to how widespread it already was. Many of the regions now included in the Soviet Union had already experienced some Russian presence during the imperial era, and due to this had Russian language already present in the local economic circles, educational institutions, and administrative structures. Although fluency and literacy in Russian was still somewhat limited, there was nonetheless a base present to work from in the development of literacy. Considering the size and position of Russia relative to the other Soviet Republics, it would seem that using Russian as the common language within the Soviet Union would have been an obvious choice for policy makers. The factor which prevented the immediate implementation of Russian was the imperial roots which had lead to its proliferation in the first place. Lenin and others feared that the association which many held between Russian language and Russian imperialism would lead members of minority nationalities to view the policy and planning of new Soviet leadership as just another attempt of imperialist Russian powers to subjugate Russia's neighbors to imperial control. This would, in turn, cause nationalist sentiments to flare violently, and would hinder the inclusion of minority autonomous regions and republics into the new socialist state and identity. As is visible in the idea of ethnic *melding*, the goal which Soviet planners were trying to put forth was one of birth into a new identity through cultural fusion, not subjugation and assimilation of minority groups by the majority. Due to Russia's very active and intrusive imperial past, attempts to spread Russian as a state language could easily bring about knee-jerk assumptions by minorities that Russia was again trying to swallow and Russify them.

This lead planners to be initially hesitant to promote Russian as a Union-wide official language.

The main question which arose due to all of this was how to accommodate the communication needs of the literacy campaign, internal economy, and administrative structure across the huge territories and linguistic divides of the Soviet Union without enflaming nationalist attitudes or treading on the rights promised to the national minorities by the state. Although simply selecting a language to be the Union's lingua franca would have been convenient in many ways for communication and literacy, this option came with the daunting question of how such a language would be spread, an issue related both to the practical difficulties of implementation as well as the diplomatic difficulties of getting national minorities to accept it without taking offense. Much like in China, the method of getting around these questions was to initially leave the question of a state language undecided, and focus on trying to develop national languages to the point where those who spoke them could be equally literate in their respective languages.

The first step to approaching this task of near incomprehensible proportions was to come up with a method of dividing and categorizing nationalities to determine what kind of language policy treatment they required. Even amongst groups whose languages have a written form, there was still tremendous variance between the degree to which each system was developed and used. There were seven main types of languages which existed at that time in the Soviet Union: 1) languages without written forms 2) languages using some form of Cyrillic 3) languages using Roman alphabets (such as established communities of German- or Moldavian-speakers) 4) languages written in Arabic script 5) languages using Mongolian script 6) languages with unique orthographies (most notably Georgian and Armenian) 7) immigrant languages with a unique script (such as the Chinese Dungans).

With these language categories in mind, policy makers on the Council of National Minorities

eventually developed a four-tiered system of organization in the 1920s to determine how the literacy campaign would approach national and minority languages (Grenoble 45; Smith 51). The system, simply called the ABCD system, addressed issues of nationality sizes, whether the nationality's population was bi- or monolingual, whether or not the nationality was territorially united, the extent to which their written language was developed, and when the "language of the federation", whichever one that should be, would be introduced. These sorts of distinctions were important because they finally presented language planners with a relatively effective method of categorizing nationalities. Before, attempts to organize nationalities had been focused along ethno-linguistic lines. This proved to be problematic not only due to extremely unclear linguistic divisions in certain regions, but the fact that the nationalities did not identify themselves in these terms. Most of the time, national identities were centered around religious or geographic elements. Although this system doesn't deal with the religious aspect, it paid much greater attention to the geographic nature of nationalities. This makes it easier to differentiate between nationalities, and is practical to have in mind when planning for implementation of language policy. Having the presence or lack of a script as a primary categorizing element is also far more useful than trying to divide along ethno-linguistic lines, as it takes into account that certain groups speaking a language may be developed to a different extent than other groups speaking the same language, and therefore require different treatment. Although the system was not perfect, and later came into conflict with laws or the realities of policy implementation, it provided a relative well-organized base from which to spread literacy.

Tier A of the ABCD system covered bilingual nationalities with relatively few members and without scripts who lived in small, territorially scattered groups surrounded by larger nationalities. It was decided that these groups would have education and literature handled completely in the "language of

the federation" as opposed to trying to find some way to create all of it from scratch in their language (Grenoble 47). While this is slightly more limiting for the national language than one might expect, given the philosophy laid out above, it still does not have any prohibitive measures for the general use of national languages, and mentions nothing of the use of national languages in economic or administrative venues. Rather, the focus of this system is strictly on the quick spread of literacy. The system's B tier dealt with small to medium sized nationalities who also lacked scripts and are not united territorially, but who live in compact masses, are primarily monolingual, and are agricultural, which implies they do not lead a nomadic lifestyle. These nationalities would use their national languages for primary school, educational texts, and mass political propaganda, and the language of the federation would be reserved for secondary schools, middle professional education, and higher education (Grenoble 47).

Moving up to the C tier provides a considerable jump in terms of the development of the written language and the development of the nationalities' intellectual culture. The groups in this tier are medium to large sized and monolingual. They have their own traditional script and are either territorially united or live in compact groups which include levels of proletariat, intelligentsia, and bourgeoisie. All education through middle professional education and all educational, political-educational, and scholarly literature will be in the national language. The federal language was to be introduced no later than third grade as a second language, and its use would continue through higher education. Finally, the D tier applied to economically and culturally developed nationalities who have traditional scripts and territorial unity. All literature and education through university would be conducted in the national language, and the federal language would be introduced as a second language no later than third grade (Grenoble 47).

Although this system provides a good means of organization, and in the case of A level nationalities removes the pressing need to come up with completely new writing systems for national

languages by stipulating that education be conducted in a federal language, the conditions described in the B tier prevent the problem of writing reform from disappearing entirely. The B nationalities are monolingual and scriptless, but are supposed to have primary education, certain texts, and political propaganda in their national language. Thus the task remains of creating some kind of written form for these languages, and much like in China, this begs the question of which alphabetic system will be used to create the writing system. Due to Russian and other Cyrillic-based languages' massive presence, Cyrillic was an obvious possibility, and was initially what language planners favored. Not only did they attempt to use it to create alphabets for languages lacking orthographies, but they started converting languages with non-Cyrillic scripts into Cyrillic in the early 1920s. This, along with other changes made to languages with well established traditional scripts, was done with the justification that it better suited the needs of the people than traditional scripts and made processes like printing less expensive, more efficient, and more convenient. In later Cyrillic movements, however, such changes would be made less out of convenience, and more with a Union-wide push for Russification in mind.

Before linguistic Russification started in earnest, there was an attempt to turn language reform towards Latin scripts. The changes favoring Cyrillic quickly shifted towards the Latin alphabet during the late 1920s and early 1930s, still due in part to the Russification and imperialist implications which might be attached to Cyrillic. Latin alphabets lacked the imperialist stigma that Russian carried, offered the possibility of using American and European printing presses, and were seen as a good way of uniting the proletariat worldwide while still attending to the distinct needs of the different languages contained within that space. Attention became focused on converting languages written in Arabic into a Latin-based writing system. Such languages were mostly found in the east Caucasus and in Central Asia. By 1929, a Latin system called the New Turkic Alphabet was established and made compulsory, and publishing



houses were commanded to stop printing in Arabic (Grenoble 49). These changes, much like the first movement towards Cyrillic, were to be short lived, and the late 1930s saw a shift back towards Cyrillic and the start of Russification in earnest.

Through the early decades of the 20th century, China also began experimenting with different phonetic alphabets and their implementation, even though they remained just as indecisive as the Soviet Union on what form the system would ultimately take and how it should be implemented. The first significant attempt was made by Wang Zhao, one of the major figures in the alphabet debates. Formerly a Secretary of the Board of Rights, he fell out of favor with the government around the end of 1898 due to his reformist attitudes and requests. One of the focuses of his reformist ideas was language and script, motivated by a desire to make education more accessible and to create a script “that will bridge the spoken and written languages and unite speech and writing” (DeFrancis 40). Around 1900 he created the Mandarin alphabet, a system influenced by Japanese kana and the Manchu writing system, and centered around the Beijing dialect. It consisted of symbols representing 50 initials and 12 finals, with medials combined into the initial symbols. The system also included separate symbols to indicate tone. Although the government, in particular the empress dowager, was suspicious of his work initially out of fear that he might have a reformist agenda that stretched beyond the realm of language, the Mandarin alphabet ended up being well received and widely studied. Many even became literate in the system. Most of the support came from wealthy Chinese ladies who wanted to use the system to teach girls and women to read and write, as well as by prominent military figures, such as Yuan Shikai. Upon seeing his youngest son become literate very quickly in Wang’s system, Yuan commanded the office of educational affairs in the province where he was governor-general to create a plan for promoting the Mandarin alphabet. He also gave the troops under his command pamphlets written by Wang. The

motivation for Yuan and other military men to be interested in literacy was their desire to compete with the efficiency and power of the literate Japanese troops (DeFrancis 45).

Later, Zhao's successor Lao Naixuan continued to develop the Mandarin alphabet. Lao was monarchist and scholar who was well known for his work in mathematics, education, and language reform. His work on the Mandarin alphabet was focused on extending it to other dialects (DeFrancis 47). The fact that he was a monarchist and held several relatively important bureaucratic posts within the realm of education put him in a favorable position with the higher levels of the government, which in turn gave him much greater freedom in his work than his predecessor ever had. His first works on the Mandarin Alphabet were published in Nanjing in 1905 while Lao was acting as a private secretary and specializing in educational matters under the governor-general of Liang-Kang. This 1905 work consisted of tables of phonetic symbols for the alphabet, including signs to make the alphabet more suitable for dialects beyond the Beijing dialect, such as a sign to accommodate the fifth tone of the Nanjing dialect. During the same year, Lao also set up several schools for teaching the new alphabet (DeFrancis 47-48).

In 1907, Lao was brought before the Empress Dowager to explain and promote his modified Mandarin Alphabet. His arguments that this alphabet would increase her military and economic power by increasing literacy were apparently convincing, as she ordered the Ministry of Education to consider Lao's system and recommendations. Although Lao and his alphabet were ultimately ignored by the Ministry of Education, it is impressive that he had so much success promoting his alphabet to the government; this same Empress Dowager had formerly harassed Wang Zhao when he was originally developing the Mandarin alphabet, due mainly to his reformist attitude (DeFrancis 48).

In 1912, the Ministry of Education under the new republican government finally decided to

accept proposals made at educational conferences to officially adopt some sort of phonetic alphabet, and began planning a Conference on Unification of Pronunciation. This conference was held in 1913, and its specific goals were to “establish a standard national pronunciation for the ideographs, to analyze the national pronunciation in terms of its basic sounds, and finally to adopt a set of phonetic symbols to represent these basic sounds” (DeFrancis 55). In these goals, one can see that the aims of reform not only included writing reform and the development of a phonetic alphabet, but had now been extended to include reform of the spoken language and the attempt to find a standard pronunciation for Chinese characters. Influential educators and linguists, including Wang Zhao, were invited to participate in this conference. Other notable figures include Cai Zhang, who had developed a shorthand system to be used for recording speeches in the national assembly, and Lu Ganzhang, who had worked during the 1880s developing a Roman-based phonetic system for various dialects of his native Fujian province (DeFrancis 35, 51). Furthermore, representatives for Mongolians, Tibetans, and overseas Chinese were invited to this conference, showing the intent of the Ministry of Education for the decisions of this conference to affect the entire Chinese-speaking world and all those closely associated with it.

The conference’s atmosphere was very tense, a situation caused by both differing linguistic arguments between the various scholars as well as by the political tension building nationwide between revolutionary nationalists under Sun Yat-sen and more conservative elements of the republican government (DeFrancis 56). Dialogue at the conference centered around the issues of the form of the phonetic script, and the dialect (or dialects) to which it should be applied. For the writing systems, propositions were made for every form imaginable, ranging from kana-based to Roman to shorthand, and even some pictograph systems. As for pronunciation, the argument was split between the Mandarin camp, lead by Wang Zhao, and the groups representing southern coastal dialects, lead by language

scholars Wang Rongbo and Wu Zhihui. In the end, the sentiments that won out were that the script should not be based out of the Roman alphabet, but should be derived from or resemble characters, and should represent the sounds of the Beijing Mandarin dialect, as opposed to one of the southern coastal dialects. Lu Xuan, a well-respected writer in attendance, developed the basics of Zhuyin Zimu (注音字母; lit., sound-notating letters), later called Zhuyin Fuhao (注音符号; sound-notating symbols) or Guoyin Zimu (国音字母; National Phonetic Alphabet) by Nationalist educational authorities to stress the fact that the system served only as a pronunciation aid, and not as a replacement to the traditional Chinese *hanzi* system (DeFrancis 57). Zhuyin Zimu consisted of 39 kana-like symbols representing initial consonants and final "rhymes", and became colloquially known as "bo po mo fo" after the first four symbols in the system. This system was embraced by the Nationalists, and in the 1930s they even attempted to use the Zhuyin Zimu as the writing system for nationalist propaganda (DeFrancis 60). Ultimately, however, Zhuyin Zimu did not last, and in fact began to lose its popularity only a few years after it had been made. Its failure was a result of apathy and suspicion toward the system from the central government, a lack of unity in determining how exactly it was to be used, and its inability to compete with other systems which were being proposed and developed at the time. The government, along with many regular Chinese, feared that the system could bring about the collapse of *hanzi*, and through this separate them from their culture and past. The government further feared that the writing system could be used as a tool of revolution, especially considering how much more accessible it would be to people than *hanzi* (DeFrancis 66-67). In terms of use, promoters of the system still could not agree on how to apply it to spoken language, various dialects, and the character system. Eventually, Zhuyin Zimu fell out of use and was replaced by other systems. Although the system never gained the

Fig. 1: Zhuyin Zimu symbols (Zhuyin fuhao/bopomofo)

**Initials**

ㄅ b [p]	ㄆ p [p <sup>h</sup> ]	ㄇ m [m]	ㄈ f [f]	ㄉ d [t]	ㄊ t [t <sup>h</sup> ]	ㄋ n [n]
ㄌ l [l]	ㄍ g [k]	ㄎ k [k <sup>h</sup> ]	ㄏ h [x]	ㄐ j [tɕ]	ㄑ q [tɕ <sup>h</sup> ]	ㄒ x [ç]
ㄗ zh [tʂ]	ㄘ ch [tʂ <sup>h</sup> ]	ㄙ sh [ʂ]	ㄖ r [ʐ]	ㄗ z [ts]	ㄘ c [ts <sup>h</sup> ]	ㄙ s [s]

**Finals**

ㄚ a [a]	ㄛ o [ɔ]	ㄜ e [uɤ]	ㄝ ê [ɛ]	ㄞ ai [aɪ]	ㄟ ei [eɪ]	ㄠ ao [ɑu]
ㄡ ou [ɤu]	ㄢ an [an]	ㄣ en [ən]	ㄤ ang [ɑŋ]	ㄥ eng [əŋ]	ㄦ er [ɑɪ]	ㄩ i/yi [i]
ㄨ u/wu [u]	ㄩ ü/u/yu [y]	ㄣ ia/ya [ia]	ㄝ ie/ye [iɛ]	ㄠ iao/yao [iau]	ㄡ iu/you [iɤu]	ㄢ ian/yan [ien]
ㄣ in/yin [in]	ㄤ iang/yang [iaŋ]	ㄥ ing/ying [iŋ]	ㄨ ua/wa [ua]	ㄛ uo/wo [uɔ]	ㄞ uai/wai [uai]	ㄟ ui/wei [ueɪ]
ㄨ uan/wan [uan]	ㄣ un/wen [uən]	ㄤ uang/wang [uaŋ]	ㄥ weng [uəŋ]	ㄣ üe/yüe [yœ]	ㄢ üan/yüan [yen]	ㄣ ün/yün [yn]
ㄨ iong/yong [iuŋ]	ㄨ ong [uŋ]					

Fig.2: Zhuyin Zimu in use with hanzi (Zhuyin fuaho/bopomofo)

相<sup>ㄒㄩˋ</sup>的<sup>ㄉㄜˊ</sup>兄<sup>ㄒㄩㄥ</sup>，性<sup>ㄒㄩㄥˋ</sup>們<sup>ㄇㄣˊ</sup>平<sup>ㄆㄨㄥˊ</sup>利<sup>ㄌㄧˋ</sup>尊<sup>ㄗㄨㄣ</sup>自<sup>ㄗㄧˋ</sup>人<sup>ㄖㄣˊ</sup>。  
對<sup>ㄉㄞˋ</sup>精<sup>ㄑㄩㄥ</sup>弟<sup>ㄉㄧˋ</sup>並<sup>ㄅㄨˋ</sup>和<sup>ㄏㄜˊ</sup>賦<sup>ㄈㄨˋ</sup>等<sup>ㄉㄨㄥ</sup>上<sup>ㄕㄨˋ</sup>嚴<sup>ㄧㄢ</sup>由<sup>ㄩ</sup>人<sup>ㄖㄣˊ</sup>。  
待<sup>ㄉㄞˋ</sup>神<sup>ㄕㄨㄣ</sup>關<sup>ㄍㄨㄢ</sup>應<sup>ㄩ</sup>良<sup>ㄌㄨㄥˊ</sup>有<sup>ㄩˋ</sup>。一<sup>ㄧ</sup>和<sup>ㄏㄜˊ</sup>，生<sup>ㄕㄨㄥ</sup>。  
互<sup>ㄏㄨˋ</sup>係<sup>ㄟ</sup>以<sup>ㄧˋ</sup>心<sup>ㄒㄩㄣ</sup>理<sup>ㄌㄧˋ</sup>他<sup>ㄏㄜˊ</sup>律<sup>ㄌㄩˋ</sup>權<sup>ㄑㄩㄢ</sup>在<sup>ㄗㄞˋ</sup>而<sup>ㄦ</sup>。

permanence and recognition of Hanyu Pinyin in Mainland China, due mainly to suspicions that it might damage the use of traditional Chinese writing and traditional culture as a whole, it is still used to this day in Taiwan to teach children standard Mandarin.

As Zhuyin Zimu began to slowly fall out of favor, the idea of romanization began to rise. This lead to the next significant attempt at a phonetic system, the Guoyu Luomazi (国语罗马字), also known as the National Language Romanization. The system's primary creator was Y.R. Zhao, a linguist particularly interested in the alphabetization of Chinese. His main views on the creation of a phonetic alphabet were that it should have a limited number of letters, preferably no more than the 26 letters of the roman alphabet; that the indication of tones was not absolutely necessary, and should perhaps only be used in cases where great ambiguity would be caused without indication of the tone. These, along with other principles which Zhao felt should be applied in the romanization of Chinese, quickly became popular and accepted by other linguists. When the Ministry of Education was asked in 1923 to form a committee focused on romanization, Zhao was included amongst its members. Although the general committee proceeded at a very slow pace, Zhao worked independently though 1925 and

1926 with several other language experts in the committee, and it was there that Guoyu Luomazi was produced. Unlike Zhuyin Zimu, Guoyu Luomazi used the roman alphabet as its base. Its phonetic expression of Chinese is in many ways very similar to the later Hanyu Pinyin system, but there is a significant difference in the way tones are expressed. Guoyu Luomazi is distinct in its use of changes in spelling to differentiate between tones. For example, the Pinyin sound "ba" would be romanized the same in Guoyu Luomazi way when pronounced with the first tone, but is spelled "bar" for the second tone, "baa" for the third, and "bah" for the fourth. The specific changes vary depending on the medials and finals of the word, but the system is consistent in that each phonetic possibility has four different spellings to differentiate between the tones (DeFrancis 74). Another important characteristic of the system, implied by the system of tone markers, is the fact that it is built to be used for the Beijing dialect; having only 4 spelling differentiations for tones prevents it from being used on many other dialects which have more or fewer than 4 tones. Through this and their support of having a standard national language, Zhao and his co-engineers were promoting the use of Mandarin for a national language (DeFrancis 75).

Although it had been created several years earlier, Guoyu Luomazi truly began to take off in 1928 due to renewed arguments for the abolition of *hanzi*. This abolition movement was set off when Peng Xuepei published an article called “Abolish Chinese characters! Adopt a phonetic script!” (DeFrancis 76). Although Peng did not mention Guoyu Luomazi in this article, he later learned to use it and came to generally support it. Li Chih-hsi even felt that, with enough energy put into its implementation, Guoyu Luomazi could be established nationally as a functioning system in less than a hundred years. Attempts to teach it to the public quickly began. Several English works were published in translation using Guoyu Luomazi, it was put into textbooks as a pronunciation aid, and several journals devoted to its use were established. In 1934, there was even a movement to teach it to rail

workers in Henan, lead by Huang Xuezhou, a high-ranking official of the Lunghai Railroad (DeFrancis 78). This and other attempts to teach the system in provincial areas were said to have been very successful, but ultimately the system did not last due to being too complicated and rigid, especially when it came to tone markings. Linguists such as Lu Hsun and Bernhard Karlgren also felt that the system was complex to the point where only a trained linguist could understand it, and therefore impractical to implement for general public use (DeFrancis 78-79).

It was around this time that the idea of linguistic unity became a significant and permanent part of writing reform in China. The possibility of picking one dialect as a national standard had long been under question. Zhao's Mandarin Alphabet and the 1913 councils had both selected Mandarin as a standard pronunciation system for the proposed national writing system, and this was further reinforced by Guoyu Luomazi being centered around the Beijing dialect. There were still linguists who felt that a southern coastal language should be selected instead of Mandarin, as well as those such as Lao Naixuan who wanted writing systems to extend beyond a national language to accommodate smaller dialects, but the most influential linguists and phonetic systems were all tending toward Mandarin as a unifying language. This desire for unity links into a desire for national unity beyond the realm of language which was stirring at that time, but many saw linguistic unification as a stepping stone towards the greater geo- and sociopolitical unification desired by many.

The final system of note which was created for romanization purposes of Chinese before the creation of Hanyu Pinyin was Lading Hua Xin Wenzi (拉丁化新文字), usually shortened to Xin Wenzi or Beila<sup>4</sup> (北拉), due to it being the latinization of northern dialects (primarily Mandarin). Xin Wenzi is of particular importance to this paper in that it was developed in cooperation between Soviet and

---

<sup>4</sup> *Bei* (北) means north.



Chinese linguists. The original inspiration for its creation developed in Russia in response to the Chinese-speaking Dungan population living there. The Dungan are a Muslim Chinese ethnic group, related to the Hui, who migrated into Russia and Central Asia during the latter half of the 19th century. Their language is a northern Chinese dialect, and at the time still used *hanzi* for its writing system. The Dungan and their language first entered the concerns of Soviet language planners when the Dungan language became subject to latinization under the implementation of the New Turkic Alphabet in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. However, as Dungan is not a Turkic language, the system matched the phonetic and tonal aspects of Dungan poorly, and it was determined that a different system would be required to latinize Dungan. Fortunately, there had already been efforts in the Soviet Union to come up with a system to romanize Chinese. Qu Qiubai and V.S. Kolokolov had been working in Moscow at the Scientific Research Institute on China on a system similar to the Guoyu Luomazi, differing mainly in that it sought to mark tones only when absolutely necessary, as well as to accommodate other main dialects beyond Mandarin. As in China, there were significant concerns as to whether the system could work, and many of them were the same as the troubles which had plagued the other Latin systems which had already been attempted in China. Both Russians and Chinese worried that the implementation of a Latin system was ultimately not practical, and that Chinese was too connected to *hanzi* on a fundamental level to even be given a phonetic system (DeFrancis 96). It should be noted that the goal for this new system, at least within the borders of the Soviet Union, was to entirely replace *hanzi* in the way that the New Turkic Alphabet had been intended to replace Arabic script, thus making the ability of the new system to function smoothly completely independent of *hanzi* of great importance. Beyond the system itself, it is interesting to note that there were also concerns stirred up by the fact that Qu Qiubai was not actually a trained linguist but a political activist, leading to doubts about the quality of his

work, which was often filled with mistakes (DeFrancis 92, 97-98).

In 1930, the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad set up a commission under B.M. Alexeiev to collect the best sinologists of the Soviet Union to work with Qu and Kolokolov on their latinization project. These specialists included sinologist-linguist A. A. Dragunov; B. A. Vasil'ev, who had researched Dungan language firsthand while living with them; Y. K. Tschutskii, a scholar of Southern Chinese languages and dialects; and A. G. Shirintsin, who studied Shandong dialect and its fragmentation. This group of experts, called the Latinization Commission, determined that latinization with minimal tone indicators was the best hope for spreading literacy amongst the Chinese-speaking peoples in the Soviet Union (DeFrancis 98). As the system was further developed, it remained very similar to Qu's original ideas, but was more linguistically sound and consistent due to the presence of trained linguists in the creation of this latest incarnation.

By 1931, the Xin Wenzi system was ready and promotion began. In 1931 at the First Conference on the Latinization of Chinese in Vladivostok, a group composed of representatives from the Communist Academy, the Academy of Sciences, and the Chinese population of the Soviet Union voted unanimously to adopt Xin Wenzi for Chinese language schools, textbooks, other books, and literacy movements in the USSR from 1932 onward. A branch of the Communist Academy's Scientific Research Institute on China, called the Far Eastern Committee on the New Alphabet, was established to oversee the implementation of this decision. In 1932, the Far Eastern Regional Conference on the Latinization of Chinese was held to review the script and its promotion. The Far Eastern Committee on the New Alphabet reported more than 100 teachers of Xin Wenzi had been trained and sent out to work, and that even though there had been some "organizational difficulties," over 2,000 Chinese in the Soviet Union had been made literate in the new system (DeFrancis 101). Although there was some

discussion on changing the orthography of the alphabet, the script was ultimately left unchanged, and plans were made to promote latinization in the second Five Year Plan. From 1932 to 1934, Xin Wenzhi was made compulsory in all Chinese educational institutions in Russia's Far East, with *hanzi* only being introduced as a special course in second year. By 1938, it was reported that most of the Chinese in the Soviet Union were literate in the new Latin script (DeFrancis 104), and although the Nationalists in China did not support the system, it had gained a foothold in some Communist-controlled areas in China. The greatest benefit of the system was that through the literacy it offered, Chinese in the Soviet Union were being given greater access to better education and job opportunities (DeFrancis 104).

Despite its apparent success, though, Xin Wenzhi did not last. Due to Chinese speakers, including the Dungan, being a minority in the Soviet Union, most important professional and technical works were not translated into Chinese, even once the Xin Wenzhi system was developed. Chinese-speaking professionals were therefore forced to continue relying on Russian works. Combined with rapid assimilation, growing bi- and trilingualism amongst Chinese speakers, and the emigration of ethnic Chinese back to China, the distinct Chinese population of the USSR disappeared, and with it went Xin Wenzhi (DeFrancis 105-106). Although the system continued in some parts of China until the 50s, it was eventually replaced entirely by Hanyu Pinyin.

From the mid-20s through most of the first two decades of the PRC, China floated in a sea of different systems of romanization, some more successful than others. There did not seem to be any clear inclination as to how they were going to resolve the situation and select a national and standardized phonetic alphabet, or what that alphabet would look like. This finally changed in 1956 when Chairman Mao himself expressed the opinion that the latin alphabet was the best base for creating a phonetic system. Three weeks later, the Committee on Script Reform, which had been grappling with other

issues of written language beyond the phonetic system, issued the Draft of the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing, known in Chinese as Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an (汉语拼音方案). As is visible in the draft's Chinese name, this marked the start of the growth of *pinyin*, the system now most commonly used to phoneticize Mandarin Chinese. The *pinyin* system as it exists today consists of the 26 roman letters<sup>5</sup> of the English alphabet and four symbols indication tone. These tone symbols are placed over the vowel in a syllable; in the case of multiple vowels, the one that falls closest to the beginning of the alphabet bears the tone marker. The scheme proposed in the 1956 draft was approved by the National People's Congress, and that year in his speech "The Immediate Tasks of Writing Reform," Premier Zhou Enlai stressed the careful revision and promotion of the Hanyu Pinyin scheme. Planning with regards to pinyin, and ultimately all language planning, was pushed aside from the late 1950s through the mid 1960s due to Mao's policies during the Great Leap Forward, and while Hanyu Pinyin was quite significantly applied to minorities in 1965, pinyin and language planning once again fell by the wayside with the start of the Cultural Revolution (Rohsenow 26-28).

Policy makers began to turn their attention back to matters of language in the early and mid 1980s. In 1986 at the Second National Conference on Language and Script it was decided that Hanyu Pinyin would not be developed into an independent writing system, finally resolving the longstanding debate on whether *hanzi* would survive the creation of a phonetic alphabet. This was, however, rather disappointing to a significant minority in the circles concerned with language reform and planning who had still been hoping that *pinyin* would be able to establish itself as a de facto writing system. As one can currently see, Hanyu Pinyin was fated to remain an auxiliary system, serving as a learning and pronunciation aid to those becoming literate in the *hanzi* system (Rohsenow 30-31).

---

<sup>5</sup> There is no sound in Mandarin which is the equivalent to or even approximates the English letter v, but v is still occasionally used in *pinyin* to express a pronunciation change in the vowel u. This sound can also be written as ü.

An important aspect of *pinyin* beyond the fact that it finally ended the alphabet debates was the role it played in shaping the spoken language of China. Before the establishment of *pinyin*, arguments over which phonetic system should be used were accompanied by arguments on which spoken form the phonetic system should express. Previous systems such as Wang Zhao's Mandarin Alphabet, Guoyu Luomazi, and Xin Wenzi had all centered themselves on the northern Mandarin dialect, but there had still been dissident elements, such as Lao Naixuan, who sought to make systems work with or focus on other dialects. *Pinyin* provided the final say in this argument. Its spelling was based on the Beijing Mandarin dialect. Thus, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) endorsed *pinyin* as the official phonetic system for *hanzi*, it was endorsing Beijing pronunciation as the official pronunciation of *hanzi*. This was the first time the government had put forth an opinion on the standardization of *hanzi* pronunciation; previously, the pronunciation debate had existed only between scholars. Furthermore, once this opinion was stated, the Chinese government made efforts to implement and spread standardized pronunciation to the same degree that they sought to implement and spread *pinyin*. The state set out in 1957 to create a Mandarin-based *putonghua*, which translates as "common language." *Putonghua* would be attached to the *pinyin* system, and would serve as the official pronunciation of *hanzi* (Rohsenow 24). This goal became one of the main focuses of Chinese language policy from the 1960s onward, and *putonghua*, known in English as standard Mandarin, still exists alongside *pinyin* and simplified *hanzi* today as the primary means of official communication in the realms of education, government, and commerce in China.

Throughout the 1930s, policy in the Soviet Union concerned with standardizing the writing system also became much more decisive than it had been, but the direction in which it began to develop was quite unexpected in light of the philosophy and views which had initially guided Soviet language

planning. Language planning in all forms began to shift in favor of Russian as opposed to national languages. Although the focus on national languages had more or less ended by 1934, the true signifier of the start of Russification came in 1938 when the study of Russian was officially decreed compulsory for school children. This stands in distinct tension to article 121 of the 1936 constitution, which guaranteed the right to educational instruction in one's own mother tongue. Although the 1938 decree doesn't revoke this right, it gave Russian a boost in status which it had long lacked when compared to national languages. Policy decisions like the 1936 article had been important in driving the development and preservation of writing systems for national languages, so it is not surprising that around the time that the influence of Russian began to rise, so too rose the influence of Cyrillic. In 1939, Azerbaijan abandoned the New Turkic Alphabet in favor of a Cyrillic writing system, and the other republics which had so recently been converted to the New Turkic system began to follow suit. By 1940, Soviet policy had changed the script of all republics to Cyrillic and had abandoned all other phonetic systems. The languages which escaped this conversion were few. The most notable examples are Georgian and Armenian, which were left more or less alone into the 70s owing to how well established their traditional writing systems were. Yiddish script, a derivative of the Hebrew alphabet, and the latin-based language of the Baltic states also held out against Cyrillic, but such cases were the exception rather than the rule (Grenoble 49-51). The most significant blow of the era to minority language rights was a clause in the Education Reforms of 1958-59 which stated that education in one's mother tongue was no longer compulsory, essentially revoking the right given in the 1936 constitution. The result of this clause was a push to begin teaching children Russian as early as possible, as well as pressure on some non-Russian languages. Although certain languages, particularly Central Asian ones, saw their situation improve slightly due to fewer cultural restrictions under Khrushchev, national languages would never regain the

position they had held before World War II (Grenoble 57-58).

This new linguistic atmosphere continued through Stalin's reign and beyond, all the way into the Khrushchev era. The new vision of the Soviet people during this time was one centered around linguistic and political unity, and the usefulness of developing national and minority languages was beginning to be questioned. The original intent of supporting national languages as opposed to a single Union-wide language had been to placate these minorities and supply them with socialist ideology. This should have motivated them to move away from their national identity toward a new socialist identity, but national identities were still strong. It seemed that the plan of building a unified socialist state through minority language development had backfired, and language policy needed to be steered down a new path. Since unity within the state was the desired outcome, creating a unified system of written and spoken language across the USSR looked to be a promising course of language planning. Russian was the language of the original revolution in the Soviet Union, the language of the central administrative points within the Union, and had long stood as an option for a statewide language. Previously, the state had feared that using Russian as an official language nationwide would provoke nationalist responses from the Union's minorities, and had therefore pushed Russian aside. However, considering the failure of their minority-centered policy to extinguish nationalism, the state under Stalin proceeded to a plan of Russification with the hopes that this attempt to use language to create a unified socialist state would be more successful. Russian and Cyrillic became the official language and writing system of the USSR, and occupied a central position in the spheres of education and government.

Although Russian was being supported by party rhetoric, there were also practical aspects within society which were promoting or demanding the use of Russian. One of the more significant was the state of bilingualism. By 1979, 40% of non-Russians claimed to be bilingual, but 97% of Russians

were monolingual. With 82% of the population claiming some knowledge of Russian, it was the obvious lingua franca at this point (Grenoble 58-59). Furthermore, it had come to clearly dominate the realm of education, and many institutions were beginning to offer instruction only in Russian. As education was one of the greatest focal points of Soviet policy, this was perhaps one of the most definite markers that the age of national languages was over, and Russian was in to stay as a federal language.

At this point, how to handle writing systems in Russia had more or less been determined and was, if not a closed issue, not open to question the way it once had been. China, however, could not solve the problems of written language reform with the decision that Hanyu Pinyin was to be the phonetic system paired with *hanzi*. *Hanzi* themselves provided their own debate, one that stretched alongside the debate over phonetic systems for almost as long as the phonetic debate existed. The main question of *hanzi*, beyond the initial one of whether their use should even continue in light of a phonetic alphabet, was that of their simplification. Initial attempts at character simplification in the early 20th century were not particularly successful; the 1935 attempt to simplify 324 characters was blocked by conservative forces in the nationalist government (Rohsenow 22). After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, however, character simplification became a priority, and in fact one facet of the threefold goal of language policy which guided the PRC's language planning for its first three decades (the other two points being the development and proliferation of a common language and Hanyu Pinyin). This was brought about mainly by the focus of PRC planners on raising literacy rates. As the difficulty of learning to read *hanzi* was one of the primary contributors to low literacy rates in China, policy makers saw character simplification as being on an equal level of importance with the creation and spread of pinyin.

The groundwork for the simplified *hanzi* used today in Mainland China was laid in 1949 with



the creation of the Chinese Script Reform Association, which was later renamed the Committee for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language. The first major step in the simplification process was made by the Committee while meeting with the Ministry of Education at the 1955 National Conference on Script Reform. This conference focused on character simplification, and resulted in the passing of the Revised Draft of the Scheme for the Simplification of Chinese Characters, as well as the Draft of the List of the First Set of Variant Characters to be Standardized. After running through several trial lists during the following year, the State Council approved First Scheme for Chinese Character Simplification, a list of 515 simplified characters and 54 simplified character components (Rohsenow 23).

As was the case for *pinyin*, the process of character simplification was put on hold during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. However, between the two periods, in 1964, the 1956 character list was extended to 2,236 characters, and the Unification of Forms for Chinese Characters for Typewriter and Linotype Machines was issued in order to start implementing the new simplified characters in typing and printing. With the exception of some slight alterations made to the 1964 list of simplified characters, the process of character simplification had ended. By the late 1980s, the characters from the amended 1964 list were the standard for all newspapers, periodicals, and books printed in modern Chinese throughout mainland China. Focus at this point was shifted to ensuring that the simplified characters were used in a standardized manner (Rohsenow 28-29).

In the arc of both Soviet and Chinese language reform and planning, there is a definite overlap in the focus and course of policy. Policy in both countries begins by attempting to develop language across its full spectrum within the country; in the Soviet Union, an enormous amount of energy was devoted to the development of a wide variety of minority languages, and the alphabet/pronunciation debates in China experimented with various dialects and consulted non-Chinese speaking minorities within the

country. Due to value which the government and language policy makers placed on literacy, the focus of policy in both countries tended to be aimed specifically at creating writing systems and standard literary forms, as well as educating people in these systems and forms. In both states, however, there is a turning point reached around the end of the first decade of socialist rule. The state begins to abandon the policies that support national minorities and turn their attention toward creating a unified, official language of the party state. The new writing systems of the USSR are discarded in favor of Cyrillic, and China settles on Hanyu Pinyin, simplified *hanzi*, and Mandarin-based *putonghua* as its official writing system and the pronunciation attached to this system. This switch in language policy signifies the start of the Russification and Sinicization processes which will build momentum through the future of the USSR and PRC. Looking at policy in such broad terms only presents a limited picture of the situation, however. In order to get a more detailed comparison of Chinese and Soviet language policy, it is necessary to observe their development in a more confined environment, such as the one provided by a single language which exists separately from Russian and Chinese, but still was affected by the policies of both the USSR and the PRC.

## **Chapter Two: The Case of the Mongolian Language**

### **Introduction to the Mongolian Language**

Beyond being similar in their overall course, Soviet and Chinese language policy have also intersected in terms of the languages they have affected. These two countries shared an extensive border across Central Asia and southeastern Siberia, and although the geopolitical boundaries between them were clearly defined, the ethnic and linguistic ones were not. Beyond the overlaps between Han and Russian ethnic groups caused by immigration, there were (and continue to be) a wide spread of Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek, Uighur, Dungan, and Mongolian ethnic communities settled across both China and the space which the USSR encompassed. These communities, sometimes large enough to be established as autonomous ethnic regions, created pockets of language which brought further linguistic diversity to both the USSR and PRC, and lead to all of these national languages being influenced by both Chinese and Soviet language policy. Such instances provide an excellent opportunity to compare these two language planning tracks not only in terms of their goals, ideology, specific policies, and effects on their respective linguistic environment, but also in terms of how they both affected one shared language. Therefore, in order to better compare the language policies of the Soviet Union and China, this next section will look at them in the context of a common language, Mongolian.

Mongolian speaking peoples have long been spread across Eastern Siberia, Mongolia, and China, and through their location have spent much of their history interacting with Russia and China. Outside of the country of Mongolia, ethnic Mongolians can be found throughout Eastern Russia and ten Chinese provinces, particularly Liaoning, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. In spite of its frequent contact with Russian and Chinese, though, Mongolian has little to no

linguistic relation to its neighbors. While Russian falls into the East Slavic branch of the Indo-European family, and Chinese is Sino-Tibetan, Mongolian falls into the Mongolian branch of the Altaic family, a family which it shares with languages such as Turkish, Kazakh, Tatar, Uighur, and many East Siberian languages. The entire family shares characteristics of vowel harmony (generally centered around front and back vowels) and subject-object-verb syntax, with the verb falling at the end of the sentence or clause. Most Altaic languages are agglutinative<sup>6</sup>. Even in such a brief overview of the Altaic family and Mongolian's place there, it is already quite clear how different Mongolian language is from the Russian and Chinese on either side of it.

Although there are many dialects within the Mongolian-speaking world, the most significant ones are Khalkha, Oirat, Buriat (sometimes written Buryat), and Khorchin-Kharacin. Khalkha could be considered the main dialect in that it has the greatest number of speakers and the most prestige attached to it (Caodaobateer 290). It is the standard in Mongolia, and is spoken throughout central and western Inner Mongolia as well. Khorchin-Kharacin is also spoken in Inner Mongolia, and due to long-term contact with Chinese has experienced some degree of sinicization. Oirat is spoken across northern and northwestern China and up into southern Siberia. Buriat is the primary dialect in the north of Mongolia and amongst the Buryat Mongols in Russia (Caodaobateer 290). There is, however, some degree of mutual intelligibility between the dialects, leading in turn to some degree of linguistic unity throughout the Mongol-speaking world, regardless of political borders (Ramsey 202).

---

<sup>6</sup> Agglutinative languages rely heavily on the addition of suffixes to a root to create parts of speech centered around a the concept which the root expresses. In *The Languages of China*, Ramsey gives the following example of Mongolian agglutinative morphology (175):

bari- "to seize"  
bari-lda "to seize each other, to wrestle"  
bari-ld-aa "the wrestling"  
bari-ld-aa-tsi "wrestler"  
bari-ld-aa-tsi-d "wrestlers"  
bari-ld-aa-tsi-d-ta "to the wrestlers"

Mongolian is traditionally attached to a well-established writing system, the first known example of which dates back to the early 13th century. It was derived from Old Uighur script, and still shares certain characteristics with the Uighur writing system, such as each letter having a different form dependent upon whether it is in an initial, medial, or final position in a word. Due to the dependence of how a letter is written on placement and letter combinations, one usually learns Mongolian in syllables instead of individual letters. Mongolian script is printed and read vertically from left to right. Although there have been various suggestions throughout history to edit or replace the traditional Mongolian script, most notably the failed hP'ags-pa script and the more successful modified Cyrillic now used in Mongolia, the traditional script is still used in Inner Mongolia to this day (Ramsey 207-212).

Yet again, one cannot ignore how linguistically different Mongolian is when compared to Russian or Chinese in terms of all major qualities: phonetics, morphology, syntax, writing systems, and so on. Nonetheless, the relations that Mongolia has held with Russia/the USSR and China have led to linguistic influence from both sides, particularly in the 20th century. Within their policy interactions with the Mongolian peoples and language, we are able to see examples of the major failures and triumphs of Soviet and Chinese state language policy which mirror trends in the overall arch of language policy in both states to a surprising degree. On one hand, the Soviet Union's interactions with the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR; the current-day country of Mongolia) reflect Soviet failure to implement Russian as a lingua franca across the Soviet republics in spite of initially having strong political and cultural influence. This was due mainly to limited manpower and political authority, which ultimately left the Soviets unable to divorce the Mongolians from their national identity and subsume them into the socialist supranational identity. The same phenomenon can be observed within the Soviet Union in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. On the other hand, China's Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region

(IMAR) presents a case of the PRC succeeding at what the USSR failed to do in the MPR. Through political regulation and the migration of Mandarin-speakers into traditionally Mongolian regions, the PRC has made the use of Mandarin Chinese a necessity in modern urban and professional life. This has lead the younger generation to begin abandoning their Mongolian linguistic identity in favor of a Mandarin Chinese identity which will grant them greater opportunities for social, political, educational, and career-related success.

### **The Mongolian People's Republic and Soviet Language Policy**

The country that we now know as Mongolia has spent a great deal of time being shoved and tugged back and forth in between China and Russia over the past century, and due to this has been influenced culturally, politically, and linguistically by the two countries. Mongolia began the 20th century as a part of Qing empire, and declared its independence from China in 1911 when the Manchu dynasty came to an end (Serebrennikov 510). Over the next several years, there was much maneuvering between Russia and China to determine where Mongolia would stand in relation to the two of them. The Russians moved right away to increase their influence by establishing a school in Mongolia (classes and administration were in Mongolian, not Russian), as well as a newspaper called The New Mirror which would bring foreign literature in translation to Mongolians. The project was proposed by the Russian Minister to Urga (the capital of Mongolia, now called Ulaanbaatar), Ivan Korostovetz. He served as principal of the school and publisher-editor of the newspaper, but handed the writing and translation for the newspaper over to Buriat C. Zhamcarano. Zhamcarano worked with Russian original pieces or translations of Western literature to provide content for the newspaper, especially as there was not much in the way of Mongolian modern literature for him to put in the paper (Krueger, "The Impact...")

*Fig. 3 Mongolian Traditional Script and Mongolian Cyrillic: Vowels (Mongolian)*

Initial								
Medial								
Final								
Cyrillic	A	Э	И	О / У	Ө / Ү	Е	Ё / Ю	Я
Latin	A	E	I	O / U	Ö / Ü	Ye	Yo / Yu	Ya

*Fig. 4 Mongolian Traditional Script and Mongolian Cyrillic: Consonants (Mongolian)*

Initial									
Medial									
Final									
Cyrillic	Н	Н	Б	П	Х	Г	М	Л	Х
Latin	N	Ng	B	P	Kh, Q	Gh, ɣ	M	L	H
Initial									
Medial									
Final									
Cyrillic	Г	С	Ш	Т	Д	Ч	Ж	Й	Р
Latin	G	S	Sh	T	D	Ch	J	Y	R
Initial									
Medial									
Final									
Cyrillic	В	Ф	Ч / Ц	Г	К	Ц	З	Х	Лх
Latin	V	F	Ch / Ts	G	K	Ts	Z	H	Lkh

*Fig. 5 Examples of Consonant-Vowel Combinations (Mongolian)*

Initial	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ
Medial	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ
Final	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ	ᠨ
Cyrillic	Нэ / Гэ	Ни / Ги	Нө/ү / Гө/ү	Ба/э	Би	Бо/у	Бө/ү
Latin	Ne / Ge	Ni / Gi	Nö/ü / Gö/ü	Ba/e	Bi	Bo/u	Bö/ü

26). This project, the newspaper in particular, marked the first establishment of Russian linguistic and cultural power in Mongolia. Even though the paper was written in Mongolian, its foreign content was decided by Russians, and this content often included works of Russian literature. At the time the material published was relatively innocent, consisting mainly of short stories or novel excerpts by Western authors translated into Mongolian (usually based off of a Russian translation), news of regional or national interest, and informative articles. The paper served mainly as a means for the Russians to be perceived in a favorable light by the Mongolians, or at least in a better light than the Chinese. It was replaced in 1915 by The Capital City News, another paper similar in nature to its predecessor. This new paper continued to present translations of Western works by authors such as Hans Christian Andersen, Robert Louis Stevenson, Guy de Maupassant, and Jonathan Swift. It is easy to imagine, though, how such a project could be later used as a propaganda tool to present the Mongolian public with works of a more Marxist slant in order to gain political leverage.

The Sino-Russo-Mongolian tripartite agreement established Mongolia under Chinese sovereignty as an autonomous region in 1915, but by 1921 the capital Urga was occupied by Soviet troops and Mongolia once again existed as its own state entirely separate from China (Serebrennikov



510). In 1924, the new constitution stating that “Outer Mongolia is an independent republic in which the laboring classes hold supreme power” established the Mongolian People’s Republic, which promptly adopted a new government very similar to the one in Moscow (Serebrennikov 511). Even before this, though, planning for the new state had already begun between the Soviets and Mongolian leaders. Their first step was the establishment of a literacy campaign in 1921-22. The campaign was much needed, considering the fact that even by 1931 the literacy rate was only somewhere around 5 percent. A decree was eventually made in 1947 stating that literacy was compulsory, and by 1954 the government claimed that absolute literacy had been achieved (Krueger, “Education...” 183).

On the path towards literacy, the translations which had begun in the New Mirror continued to play an important role. While Russian and Western literary works continued to be translated into Mongolian, Soviet Buriat Mikhail Bogdanov also began translating artistic, scientific, and political literature from Germany. His work was supplemented by that of the former chairman of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, Damba Dor'i, who translated a large body of Marxist-Leninist literature into Mongolian (Krueger, “The Impact...” 26-27). It was at this point that the focus was turned away from classic literature to the classics of the revolution written by Lenin and Stalin. Other popular authors for translation in the mid-twenties to early thirties included Vladimir Mayakovsky, Nikolai Ostrovskii, Alexander Fadeev, and Konstantin Simonov (Krueger, “The Impact...” 29-30). These additions to previous literary translations, combined with the new socialist Mongolian state, clearly show just how influential the Soviet presence and sociopolitical thought had become in Mongolia and Mongolian translation. As time passed, the translation of foreign works into Mongolian became more and more politically charged, until it functioned almost solely as a propaganda tool (Krueger, “The Impact...” 29).

The Soviet influence in Mongolia extended far beyond translation. As one can see in the pre-MPR relations between Mongolia and Russia (both late imperial and early Soviet), Russia's efforts to help establish Mongolia as a state separate from China imply some degree of political interest in Mongolia. The root of this interest was in fact economic; Russia, and later the Soviet Union, hoped to gain access to Mongolia's rich mineral deposits and other natural resources. Furthermore, the USSR hoped to decrease China's political and trade influence in Mongolia, as even after the establishment of the MPR, China remained Mongolia's primary trade partner (Serebrennikov 514). Because the Soviet Union had no legitimate political control over Mongolia, any move that was too openly aggressive could cause the MPR to pull back and close itself to Soviet advances. The USSR had to work mainly through soft power plays to strengthen its influence over MPR policy and economic decisions. To achieve this, the Soviets began to cultivate influence through apparently benign cultural and political aid and support that might one day lead to more substantial forms of control. This ranged from currying favor through developmental support in the realms of healthcare and the literacy campaign to the establishing of Soviet-style political structures and providing the officials to fill such structures (Serebrennikov 512). It was determined in the first couple years of the MPR that most Mongolians lacked the training to serve in the new official and semi-official government positions, and these positions ended up being filled by specialists brought in from the Soviet Union. An example of this is the accounting department of the Mongolian Central Cooperative. It had initially been run by Mongolian bookkeepers and clerks, but in 1923 it was handed over to Soviet collaborators. This was significant not only in the clear political power that this gave the Soviets, but also in the language changes it brought about. When the department had been run by Mongolians, all records and accounts were kept in the Mongolian language. Under Soviet leadership, however, the language of the records was switched to Russian

(Serebrennikov 512). This mirrors the slow creep of Russian into official spheres which helped establish the supremacy of Russian in the USSR, albeit at a comparatively accelerated rate in the case of Mongolia.

Another act which implies a growing acceptance of Russian in the political world is the circulation of Soviet leaders' speeches via Mongolian press and radio (Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955" 346). While it is not specified in which languages these speeches were aired, there does not seem to have ever been a strong presence of Russian-Mongolian bilingualism in Soviet leaders, so if the speeches were aired in their original form, they were most likely in Russian. Again, this demonstrates the increased presence of Soviet political thought and Russian language in Mongolia's official spheres, as well as its growing use for the public's listening and reading pleasure.

The USSR was also busy building soft power in cultural circles. Beyond the cultural power offered by the earlier Soviet-lead translation projects, Soviet cultural promotion was being done through the programs such as the Pushkin Week sponsored by the Ulan Bator Committee of Trade Unions, as well as the establishment of a Soviet pen pal program (Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955" 346). 4200 Mongolians participated in the pen pal program, which further implies that these 4200 Mongolians were literate in Russian; the average Soviet citizen would not have been able to understand a letter written in Mongolian. As of 1957, a Soviet Russian-language film festival had recently occurred in Ulaanbaatar, and Mongolians enjoyed singing, dancing, and listening to Russian-language songs. Furthermore, a Russian-language newspaper was regularly being printed in Ulaanbaatar by this time, signifying that it had a large enough body of readers to qualify its long-term existence (Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955" 347). In light of Russian's growing presence in Mongolian society, it is unsurprising that Russian was introduced into schools as a foreign language. By 1959, it was in fact the

only foreign language required by Mongolian middle schools (Rupen, "Inside Outer Mongolia" 328).

By far the most significant and lasting change which Soviet influence caused in the Mongolian language came in 1941 with the adoption of Cyrillic as the official writing system. This decision initially comes across as odd; Mongolian already had a well established writing system which was approaching a 800 years of existence and had prevailed over various attempts at writing reform in the past. The Soviet reasoning was that a Cyrillic system would help increase literacy rates due to how much simpler it was compared traditional Mongolian script. Such an argument was not baseless; use of traditional script did indeed demand many superfluous letters and archaic grammar structures, and the Oirat Mongols of northwestern China had in fact created their own writing system which they called the "Clear" system in contrast to the convoluted and cumbersome nature of traditional script (Krueger, "Education..." 184; Coadaubateer 295). Although Cyrillic was adopted in 1941 and implementation began that year, the new system wasn't in use nationwide until 1946, most likely due to the Soviets needing to redirect their attention and energies toward the second World War. By 1957, Khalkha Mongolian written in Cyrillic was the standardized national language of the MPR (Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955" 357). True to what the Soviets claimed, literacy rates did rise after the arrival of Cyrillic, but as John Krueger speculates in his article on education in the MPR, it's quite likely that this jump in literacy rates "was probably more due to the intensity of the program combating illiteracy than to any superiority of the Russian alphabet." (184)

Apart from whatever contribution Cyrillic may have made towards literacy, the Soviet suggestion to adopt it in the MPR is unsurprising when one takes into account what was happening in internal Soviet language policy at that time. By 1941 Stalin's reign and World War II were in full swing, and language policy had taken on distinct tendencies of Russification. This was part of a wider

Russification track which was being used with the hopes of it keeping the USSR united through the war via a form of state-constructed nationalism more powerful than the nationalism of the individual ethnic republics. An important part of this linguistic Russification was the implementation of Cyrillic in areas where native writing systems had been allowed to persist or were being developed. Only a few years earlier, the republics using the New Turkic Alphabet had started switching over to Cyrillic, and in 1940 Soviet policy had changed the script of all Soviet languages to Cyrillic (Grenoble 41). As the MPR was a separate state, such policy decrees could not force Cyrillic upon Mongolia, but the Soviets were nonetheless doing what they could to get Cyrillic in.

The possible benefits for the USSR of Cyrillic being implemented in the MPR were substantial; although the alphabet had been adjusted to suit the phonetic needs of Mongolian, even being able to read Cyrillic in that form would make it easier for Mongolians to learn to read Russian. The more proficient the Mongolians were at Russian, the easier it would be for the Soviets to introduce them to Soviet cultural, social, and political mindsets, drawing them further into the USSR's influence. It would also provide a comfortable linguistic environment for any Russian-speaking Soviets, officials or otherwise, who might come to settle in Mongolia, and could perhaps negate the possibly deterring thought of moving to a place where life was conducted in a language they did not understand. An increase in the ethnic Russian population in Mongolia would also increase the USSR's political and cultural influence, and had this actually happened, it is quite possible that the MPR might have eventually become a Soviet republic.

The ultimate course of the MPR and the Mongolian language did not end up adhering quite as closely to the path of Russification as might have been hoped by the Soviets. While Cyrillic script did become a permanent fixture of Mongolian in the MPR, it turned out that this was to be the most

significant mark that Russian would make on the language, and even then it wasn't absolutely set in stone. Mongolians realized that the loss of their traditional script cut them off from their culture and past to some degree, and as early as 1959 efforts were being made to reintroduce traditional script in school books, especially those on Mongolian literature (Rupen, "Inside Outer Mongolia" 328). In terms of spoken language, Mongolian always remained dominant. Although Russian was taught in schools, few Mongolians ever became truly proficient in it (Rupen, "Inside Outer Mongolia" 328). Power in printing had also failed to stay centered in Russian. Although most scholarly printing had initially been done in Russian, by 1959, the MPR had developed its own flourishing and independent intelligentsia which was using Mongolian to print a wide body of books and articles, particularly in the fields of archeology and history. Even the realm of politics was increasingly pulling away from Russian sway. By the end of the 1950s, although the top Party officials were still Moscow-educated, the vast majority of Party administrators had been trained in Mongolia (Rupen, "Inside Outer Mongolia" 329). This is not to say that relations between Mongolia and Russia were through; the two of them still share political ties and probably always will, if only because of their proximity. In these relations, though, Mongolia has remained its own distinct entity, both politically and linguistically, and will likely continue to do so.

### **The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and Chinese Language Policy**

The remainder of the story of Mongolian-Russian-Chinese linguistic and political interactions belongs to the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR), a province in the northeast of China which stretches along the Mongolian border and a smaller portion of the Russian border. The relations between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Mongolian ethnic groups seemed to be relatively good at the start. The CCP's relations with most minorities started off on a positive note, in fact, as the

party rose to power promising to allow all minorities within the borders of its control continue their development "unique historical characteristics" and their distinct culture (Caodaobateer 296-297). There were several reasons for the CCP's leniency towards minority ethnic groups. First of all, the Chinese were looking to the Soviet model as they began developing their new socialist state, and support and development of minority cultures and languages was the original route which the Soviets had followed (Dreyer 370).

Beyond that, however, was the fact that the traditional territories of minorities, including those of Mongolians, were vast, remote, difficult to navigate stretches of land located along China's borders. Not only would it be difficult for the Chinese to get into these regions to regulate the languages and cultural practices, but doing so could frustrate the minorities to the point of wanting to break from the Party and the PRC. While this would have been less concerning if these regions were in China's interior, their position on the country's borders would provide them with the opportunity to side with their foreign neighbors. In the case of the IMAR, these neighbors also had a language, culture, and ethnic identity far closer to that of the Mongolian inhabitants of the IMAR than the most members of the Party did. It was safer not to push minority relations to the point where loyalty to the CCP and PRC would be questioned. In any case, minority language and identity was projected by communist leaders and policy makers to be a short-term issue; such things would eventually be discarded in favor of the new socialist identity of a PRC citizen, similar to how the different nationalities within the USSR were supposed to transcend their separate national identities to the greater Soviet identity (Dreyer 370).

Language policy affecting Mongolian-speakers began almost as soon as the PRC did. The Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, promising the development of minority languages and dialects, was given the tasks of creating and developing the written languages of

certain minorities, conducting scientific research on spoken minority languages, and training languages cadres. Programs for the first two tasks were started in 1950, and in 1951 schools for the training of language cadres were established (Schwarz 176). The IMAR regional government was just as concerned during this time about the development of minority languages as the central government was; IMAR officials released a notice in 1951 to address and amend the general indifference of the central government, Han Chinese officials and illiterate Mongolians towards education in the Mongolian language, and furthermore called for the promotion of all minority languages (Schwarz 176). The following year, province wide and lower regional levels of administration worked to organize cadres to study Mongolian language, and by 1953 most Mongol cadres in the IMAR had "generally reached the level of junior primary school" in terms of their Mongolian skills (Schwarz 177).

It seemed that the development of minority languages was on the right track; all of the tasks set for the Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference were underway, and the Party claimed to have dubbed several films, aired radio broadcasts, and printed over 700,000 books and magazines in minority languages, including, but not limited to, Mongolian (Dreyer 371). 1953 continued the pro-Mongolian policy trend on an even grander scale. The propaganda department of the Inner Mongolia-Suiyuan sub-bureau of the CCP conducted a Mongolian language work conference, the first of its kind, in order to establish a region-wide popularization program for Mongolian (Schwarz 176). The conference resulted in orders to further develop the study of Mongolian as well as make learning the language mandatory for Chinese cadres working closely with Mongolians who did not speak Chinese; to eliminate illiteracy in the IMAR with the Mongolian language; to use Mongolian-language textbooks in primary school (although Chinese may be introduced after the third grade); to translate all official documents and directives into Mongolian if they were being issued in



primarily Mongolian area; and to create a research institute which would conduct its research in Mongolian. The conference also stressed the continuation of Mongolian language cadre education and greater focus by Party leadership on issues of minority languages. During the same year, a Society for the Study of Mongolian was established to standardize technical terms and study new language problems which might arise. In addition, they began compiling a Mongolian-Chinese dictionary (Schwarz 177). In light of the the fact that the PRC had been established scarcely 4 years earlier, the degree of thought and action which had gone into the development of Mongolian and other minority languages was quite impressive.

Although initially most of the attention focused on Mongolian had been promoting the use of the language in educational and political circles, in the mid-50s plans began to develop concerning changes in the Mongolian writing system. This marks a shift in policy, as nationalities with developed writing systems were previously not pushed to change or abandon those systems; language planning with relation to script had been reserved for languages or dialects which lacked scripts entirely. In 1955, however, a group of linguists from Beijing was sent to the IMAR to investigate problems connected to the Mongolian language, and about a month after they had been dispatched it was announced that a new Cyrillic writing system would be created for Mongolian (Schwarz 177). It was to be completed by 1961, and in the mean time the training of officials, teachers, and students in this new system was to begin, as well as the printing books, journals, and magazines in the new script. In 1956, the schedule for implementation was moved forward two years, and it was expected that everything except Mongolian classical literature would be printed in the new script by 1960 (Schwarz 178). A delegation of the preparatory office of the Minority Languages Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences held a conference in May of 1956 to work on the new written language. This delegation consisted of

Beijing delegates, Mongolian-speaking delegates from all over China, and even Soviet experts from the MPR. By the end of 1956, the CCP claimed that hundreds of thousands of people had been trained in the new writing system (Schwarz 178).

The final movements in the stage of language planning characterized by enthusiasm for the development of minority languages was the attempt in 1957 to create linguistic unity within the Mongolian language. This was actually carried out by the IMAR government, seemingly with a degree of independence from Beijing. The IMAR sent out a delegation to the MPR to discuss linguistic coordination between the two regions, with an inclination towards the IMAR adopting the MPR's language policies (Bulag 757). Ulanhu, the founder of Inner Mongolia and one of the most important ethnic Mongolian Party members at the time, argued that such a course of action would be ideal because it would make the propagation of Mao in the MPR easier. However, in his article "Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China", Uradyn E. Bulag suggests that such arguments served to "ingeniously disguised an Inner Mongolian aspiration for cultural unification with the MPR." (757)

Beneath the apparent success of Chinese language policy in the IMAR, certain unsettling shifts in minority language policy had begun to appear. Although things seemed to be progressing on paper, their state in reality was a different matter. The first signs came as early as 1953. Ulanhu reported some Chinese cadres taking offense to Mongolian cadres reading in Mongolian. These Chinese cadres would state that "If you read only Mongolian, you still haven't overcome your narrow nationalist thought. Proletarians are not divided by nationality" (Bulag 758). While such attitudes may have been caused by actual political concerns, Bulag suggests the presence of "an 'ideology of contempt' for minority languages and cultures" within the ranks of Han Chinese cadres. He explains this ideology thus:

An in-built majoritarian morality of communism enabled the Chinese leadership to make

the Chinese, by virtue of their numerical majority and also of their leadership of the revolution, the chosen "people," and their language the advanced language of destiny. By this logic, minority nationalities have been defined as "backward," meaning that their own salvation lies in being assimilated to the Chinese "people". Although socialism promised equality and national liberation, nationality was seen not as an end in itself but as a means toward achieving socialism, which in turn became indistinguishable from integration into the Chinese state.(758)

The presence of such a mode of thought would give a more concrete base for the comments mentioned by Ulanhu, and would indicate that in spite of the apparently extensive work done to train Chinese cadres in Mongolian and promote the language in the political processes of the IMAR, this work had not succeeded in actually improving Chinese cadres' attitudes toward Mongolian, if it indeed was ever intended to do so. Furthermore, it provides an explanation for some of the shifts occurring in policy dealing with Mongolian throughout the next several years.

The most definite shift in policy came in 1958 with the official adoption of Hanyu Pinyin. With this, not only did attempts at the phoneticization Chinese cease, but the development of new minority alphabets ended as well. All thoughts of using Cyrillic in the IMAR or other Mongolian-speaking regions were cast aside by the state, and premier Zhou Enlai declared: "Henceforth, all nationalities, in creating or reforming their written languages, should in principle take the *pinyin* as the basis, and, moreover, should conform to the Chinese *pinyin* scheme in the pronunciation and usage of the alphabets" (Bulag 757). This decision took the first official steps down the path of Sinicization which policy makers had already been turning towards. Beyond the tendency to try to force Han words into minority languages regardless of whether they were structurally appropriate for that language, a popular solution to poor translations and inadequate teachers of minority languages was to

make minorities learn Han. When minorities complained about the difficult writing systems, the government replied that it was an obstacle which they could and must overcome (Dreyer 373). Now, however, Han Chinese had a phonetic system which might make the study of Chinese by minorities progress faster.

In 1958, another conference was held in Beijing on the topic of minority languages. It was well attended, lasted for 20 days, and produced five major new criteria for minority language policy (Schwarz 174). These criteria pushed the idea of "language alliance," where dialects without writing systems would not have their own systems developed, but would rather adopt the systems of similar dialects or languages in their surrounding area. Such dialects were "generously" told that they could adopt the writing system or other aspects of Chinese if their own language lacked such things. The criteria also demanded caution when dealing with different dialects of the same nationality<sup>7</sup> and discouraged creating more than one new writing system for any one nationality. Languages which had already been depending on the writing system of another language were not to have a distinct alphabet developed unless they were going to develop it on their own. The State council also decided that if any languages which were still being developed were similar to Chinese in pronunciation, the writing system developed for such languages was to adhere to the letters and pronunciation of *pinyin* as closely as possible. All of this, along with attempts to standardize spelling across different languages, shows the growing desire for widespread linguistic uniformity by the Chinese government and policy makers, as well as the fact that the government no longer felt the need to cater to the needs and desires of minorities. The latter attitude would indicate that the Party no longer saw minority groups and what they

---

<sup>7</sup> When the word nation comes up in the discussion of Chinese language policy, Stalin's definition of *nation* and *nationality* is being used. In the first section of his article *Marxism and the the National Question* (1912), Stalin defines a nation thus: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" (Marxists Internet Archive).

might do if dissatisfied to be as large of a threat to the CCP's power as it had been a decade ago, and the former suggests that regardless of this, the CCP was hoping to finally end the "nationality question" and bring about the absolute socialist unity which had been expected from the start. These attitudes can be seen in Chinese policy toward Mongolian and other minority languages for the remainder of the century, and mark the end of the initial enthusiasm for minority languages which had been present during the first decade of the PRC.

### **Comparisons and Implications**

When looking at socialist Chinese and Soviet Russian language policy in the IMAR and MPR, it is interesting to note that, regardless of the success or failure of language planning in these two regions, the patterns and course of policy in both regions generally reflect the course of greater language policy in the USSR and PRC. In all of these places, the founding of a new socialist state triggers a wave of enthusiastic policy aimed at protecting and developing minority languages (in the case of the IMAR and MPR, minority is to be understood as the local language as opposed to the language of the larger state entity trying to implement policy). Literacy is the first goal to be set in all cases, and the pursuit of this goal leads to extensive attempts at script development and reform in order to make the minority language more conducive to literacy and literary use. Combined with these is an attempt to create a feeling of cooperation and unity which will bring the minority groups closer to the central state and make them more willing to stay peacefully under the authority of the state implementing the policy. Additionally, the majority groups consistently hold the attitude that members of the minority will eventually cast off their national identity in favor of a greater socialist identity. Ultimately, however, a

lack manpower and and compliance by the members of both the majority and minority causes the failure of these attempts to create unity by embracing linguistic diversity. The alternative route taken is one which tends toward causing the minority to assimilate into the majority's language and culture. The logistics of this route are easier to manage, and it seems to be justifiable in that the socialist identity which the minorities were always expected to adopt has become associated with the identity of the majority. This second route is more effective, and minority languages tend to begin to break down under it. While the details of the regional Mongolian examples may vary, and the process in the MPR stops after the failure of the initial attempt at unity through diversity, these two smaller policy arcs nonetheless follow the larger general pattern of language policy in the Soviet Union and China.

As for a summary focusing more closely on the course of policy in the MPR and IMAR and its regional implications, what we see is this: the Soviet Union's interaction with the MPR generally presents an example of failure to linguistically assimilate Mongolians into the USSR through language planning, whereas the IMAR's interaction with the rest of China is generally a successful instance of the larger Chinese cultural force beginning to consume that of the Mongolians through language planning. There are several important markers to keep in mind when determining what differentiates success from failure in this situation. One is the retention rate of Mongolian by ethnic Mongols. In the case of the MPR, as of 1999, 90% of the population was recorded as being speakers of Khalkha Mongolian, with the remaining 10% of the country being divided between Turkic languages, such as Kazakh, and Russian (The World Factbook). In China, however, by 2000 at least 30% of the ethnic Mongol population (not limited to the IMAR) was bilingual in Mongolian and Chinese, and 20% could speak only Chinese; this adds up to at least half of the population being able to speak Chinese, with some of them entirely unable to speak Mongolian (Caodaobateer 299-300). Although Russian managed to leave a mark on the

education and writing systems in Mongolia and still has a small foothold in the country now, it did not manage to take root locally and begin to erode the status of Mongolian language the way that Chinese did in the IMAR.

Furthermore, there is the professional and political use of the language to take into account. In his article on the general situation of Mongolia as of 1959, Robert A. Rupen contends that while Russian is taught in middle schools as a second language, "surprisingly few Mongols speak the language well", and when it comes to the Mongolian language, it still "remains vigorously alive and serves as the means of communication at all levels and in all circles" (328-329). These circles include scholarly ones, as mentioned above; Mongolian intelligentsia and intellectual publishing managed to endure and blossom after the Soviet influence began to wane slightly by the end of the 50s. Caodaobateer observes a very different situation in China in his article on the development and use of the Mongolian language in China. In spite of holding a generally positive attitude towards the development and current state of Mongolian in China, he concedes toward the end of his article that "Mongol is no longer the regular working language in government offices above county/banner level, no longer language of social communication in manufacturing, business, or daily life in small and medium cities" (299). Chinese is now clearly recognized as the language of power and commerce in the IMAR and other Mongolian centers in China, but the dominant position in both of these spheres in Mongolia is still held by Mongolian, and not by Russian.

Finally, a factor separate from language policy but nonetheless very important is that of existence as a state. Mongolia exists today and existed for many years when it was the MPR as an independent state, whereas Inner Mongolia, regardless of its "autonomous region" status, is a province in the People's Republic of China and falls under the control of the Chinese government. In spite of the

instrumental role the Soviets played in the creation of the MPR and the extensive relations they maintained with it after its establishment, the MPR was never pulled into the USSR. On the other hand, throughout much of the imperial past and since the founding of the PRC, the IMAR has never existed separately from China.

The divergent nature of the MPR and IMAR's histories can be explained in part by this relation between the ethnic regions and the policy-creating states. Not only does China's unbroken ownership of the IMAR denote success in controlling the IMAR through language policy, it also provides reinforcement to the policy and its implementation; the consistent inclusion of the IMAR in a greater Chinese entity puts additional force and legitimacy behind any policies implemented within the region by the central Chinese government. Furthermore, it provides a very strong incentive for China not to lose control over the IMAR, as the loss of a territory which was traditionally theirs would be humiliating. This perhaps added a greater degree of importance and vigour to the implementation of sinicizing language policies. For the USSR, however, the MPR was not an integral part of the country's geographic space and history, but something desirable to acquire. As failing to pull the MPR into the USSR would be far less humiliating and delegitimizing than China losing the IMAR, it was perhaps easier for the Soviet Union to simply put the MPR to the side when the failure of their initial language policy became clear.

How two linguistically and culturally similar regions could have such different fates in their relations with the major powers of the Soviet Union and China can also be explained to a great degree by their location in relation to the major administrative centers in China and the Soviet Union, as well as their populations' relationships with native Chinese- and Russian-speaking populations. As for the former, China had the advantage when it came to administering and enforcing its language policy in the IMAR because of the relatively short distance between the IMAR and the central government in



Beijing. In the Soviet Union's case, however, they were trying to establish permanent linguistic changes in a state which was located an entire continent away from Moscow. From that distance, it is difficult not only to enforce and provide incentive to adhere to new language policy, but to even keep track of whether the policy had been implemented at all. Although Beijing is still about a 12 hour train ride from Hohhot, the IMAR's main city, this distance is relatively small in a country as large as the USSR or China, and would have likely made the trip to the IMAR for Chinese officials far more feasible than frequent trips to the MPR for Soviet officials to enforce policy and work with Mongolian cadres. The issues caused by long-distance administration are relevant not only to the comparison of the MPR and IMAR's courses, but are also applicable to wider language policy in both China and the Soviet Union. Regions such as Central Asia, Tibet, and Xinjiang have all been harder to control under language policy than places such as IMAR, Ukraine, and the Baltic States. While this difficulty doubtless comes from a variety of sources, a factor in all of the former three cases is distance and poor accessibility from central administrative points, whereas the latter three regions were both closer to central administrative points and more completely subdued under Soviet and Chinese language planning.

This issue of location heavily influences another important factor, the number of native speakers of Russian or Chinese to be found in the MPR and IMAR. Very few Russians ever settled in the MPR, whereas by the end of the first half of the twentieth century, Han Chinese settlers living in the IMAR outnumbered ethnic Mongolians five to one (Bulag 753). This high Chinese to Mongol ratio was crucial for the success of sinicizing-oriented Chinese language policy because while conferences and decrees may officially state that Chinese and pinyin should be used, it is the overwhelming presence of Chinese-speakers which actually forces minorities to use standard Mandarin Chinese in day-to-day life. When one can't avoid using Chinese whenever one leaves the house, minorities will start learning

majority languages simply to survive. As so few Russian-speakers settled in the MPR, the average person was never presented with a pressing, practical need to be proficient in Russian. Most who ever really mastered the language were people who had studied in the USSR, where such a need was present in day-to-day life (Rupen, "Inside Outer Mongolia" 328). Similar to the factor of location, the question of native speaker ratios is one which has affected regional language policy progress or lack thereof in both the USSR and the PRC on a larger scale. Central Asia, particularly the republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, had the combination of low Russian populations and high birthrates in Uzbek and Turkmen families which lead to Russian never taking as firm a grip as it managed in other regions (Grenoble 197-204). To this day, we can still see similar problems in Tibet and Xinjiang, as they have low Han populations compared to other parts of the country. The changing nature of this situation is also visible as more and more Mandarin-speakers are being encouraged to move to these regions, Tibet in particular. Mandarin is starting to become a daily necessity in large cities such as Lhasa, and while there still seem to be average to low levels of Chinese-Tibetan bilingualism amongst ethnic Tibetans, these levels seem to be higher than bilingualism amongst Han living in Tibet. It is quite possible that as more Han move to these remote regions of China, languages such as Uighur and Tibetan may begin to suffer the same slow but steady collapse which Mongolian has been experiencing for decades already.

Through the lens of Mongolian language, it is possible to understand the relationship between Soviet and Chinese language policy from a new angle. When functioning in the same linguistic environment, it becomes even easier to see how these two countries followed very similar policy courses. Mongolians under both Soviet and Chinese language planning experienced the promotion and development of their language, as well as its use to express socialist content. Although the paths of the

MPR and IMAR diverge after this initial stage of support, they still both continue to embody key characteristics of both Soviet and Chinese policy. In the case of MPR, it clearly expresses the shortcomings of national language promotion in relation to the ultimate goals of socialist state-building; the promotion of the national language, originally meant to bring Mongolians into the socialist fold, instead served to maintain and even strengthen their national identity. The independence which the MPR maintained represents the state that ethnic minorities within the USSR and PRC might have reached had these two states not enforced Russification and Sinicization program.

This move by the USSR and PRC to counteract minority nationalism is reflected in the fate of Mongolian in the IMAR; the successful implementation of the culture of the state which results in the slow consumption of the minority culture. In its expression of all of these aspects of language policy, Mongolian language provides an excellent microcosm in which to observe the course of the language planning of the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China.

## **Conclusion**

The remaining question of language policy in the Soviet Union and China is why it came to the end point that it did. Given the degree of conflict between the original Marxist socialist intentions of these states and the nationalist implications of Russification and Sinicization, it's difficult to see how such routes were deemed acceptable for socialist state building. The explanations for these processes differ between the two states. In his discussion of national forms, Wang Hui notes that the debate on national forms originated from a Mao speech in 1938. Mao argued for developing Marxism with Chinese characteristics, and triggered the discussion of what distinctly Chinese Marxism would entail, as well as how to create a united China with an identity that could transcend and encompass all of the diversity found within the nation's populace (Wang 98). Due to the relationship between language and identity, this question of determining what a Chinese nation-state would look like was tied to the question of what language would be spoken in this state.

Wang claims that "In the quest for setting up a modern nation-state, a general national language and artistic forms that transcended the local were always among the most important means for building cultural unity" (135). The view that a national language was something needed in China if it was to develop into a modern nation-state is not one which Wang is alone in holding; due to the fragmented and varied linguistic environment in China, it was generally agreed upon by linguists that some sort of national standard was needed in order to make nationwide communication, education, and administration more manageable, as well as to develop a coherent culture and state. In his work "On National Forms in Chinese Music," composer Xian Xinghai said "...because the Chinese nation is so great, its written and spoken languages and its styles and customs are highly complex and varied. If we really want to use national forms effectively, we must first unify the spoken and written languages..."

(Wang 107). The question, however, was where this national form of the language was to come from. There were so many regional dialects and variations, called "local forms" by Wang, which could either be collectively drawn upon or singled out to make the national standard (101-106). Some, such as Huang Yaomian, felt that dialects could enrich the common language and become an organic part of it, while others thought that using these local forms as a base would result in a national form that was ultimately the product of a certain region or ethnicity, and would therefore not truly be a national form (Wang 110-111). People of the latter opinion, such as Chen Boda, felt that it was better to instead pick out the pan-Chinese aspects language, such as *hanzi* characters, and use them as the base for the national form.

If language characteristics such as *hanzi* were being seen as the ideal base for a national form, this already limits the amount of influence which minority languages that had a different writing system or no writing system at all could have on the national language. Furthermore, in dialogue on national forms in the early 20th century, the concepts of "local" and "minority nationalities" were presented as interchangeable (Wang 102); considering the focus at the time on transcending local forms in the creation of the national form, it would seem that minority language had already been written off as destined to be left behind. Even for those who supported the inclusion of local or minority linguistic elements into the national language, these elements were nonetheless supposed to be blended into a new linguistic form that would transcend the origins of its components.

As is now evident, China ultimately selected the Beijing form of Northern Chinese for the national language. On the one hand, this seems hypocritical in light of everyone's aversion to settling with a regional language or dialect. When one looks at the language demographics of China, however, the leadership's choice begins to make sense and seem justifiable within the context of the national form

debates. Over 70 percent of the Chinese population at the time spoke Northern Chinese, and as this form of Chinese was one of the ones which fell within the *hanzi* system, Northern Chinese was as close to a pan-Chinese language as any dialect could get (Wang 126). Furthermore, power under the Qing dynasty had been centered in the north, so this was also a language with political authority. In the end, Pan Zinian described the situation best when he claimed that the issue of national forms was really just one of "Sinification" (Wang 124). Although minority languages were initially given a position of power via the Soviet ideology adopted by the Chinese, once the desire to create the party state language became the top concern for Chinese language policy makers, Mandarin Chinese proved to be an opponent which national minority languages could not overcome.

As for the Russification of the Soviet Union, Terry Martin contends it to be a matter of practicality and resentment (80-81). As in the case of Mongolian language, the ratio of speakers of different languages in a region plays a significant role in deciding which language will become the dominant one. The Soviet government was well aware of this, and in an attempt to protect national languages, they initially placed limits on Slavic immigration into non-Slavic republics. This would guarantee that the ratio of national language speakers to Russian speakers remained high, and would in turn help the national languages remain the dominant languages of these republics. While these restrictions may have been beneficial to the minority national languages, they were detrimental to the economic state of the republics and the Union, and by 1927 all migration restrictions were lifted for the sake of forced and rapid industrialization (Martin 76). While this did not necessarily mean that the national republics were suddenly flooded with Russian-speaking settlers, Russian speakers did migrate out into the republics over time. The ratio of Russian speakers to speakers of national languages began to rise, and in places such as the Baltic states eventually rose to a level which was very destructive for

the regional languages.

Another issue of practicality was the limited success in implementing policies that were made to support national languages. It was initially the policy of the central state to establish the titular languages of the republics as the language of the republics' governments. Surprisingly, these efforts failed, with the exception of Armenia and Georgia, and the policy was simply abandoned after 1932. Russian did not become the only language used in republican governments at this time, but it was the dominant one, and showed this dominance within the realms of the Party, large industrial enterprises, and higher technical education (Martin 81).

Furthermore, in the 1920s, many ethnic Russians resented Bolsheviks' support of minority rights (Martin 80-81). The promotion of ethnic minority rights was in some ways very aggressive, and at times existed to the detriment of the rights of ethnic Russians. By the late 1920s, the Bolshevik leadership was also beginning to feel that the preference and rights granted to the national minorities had lead to excessive national assertiveness among non-Russian cultural and political elites (Martin 81). This was the exact opposite of the outcome policy makers had in mind when these rights had been granted; once the minorities' demands were being satisfied, they were supposed to begin integrating themselves into the supranational socialist state, not present more national demands with even greater aggression. As this was detrimental to creating a unified state, policy makers began to reduce the preference for national minorities in their policies, and move back in a more Russian direction.

Finally, the case presented by Mongolian provides a factor which is significant to both Russification and Sinicization: demographics. As expressed in the previous chapter, the number of speakers of a language in any given region plays a central role in how influential this language will become. In the PRC and the Soviet Union, Mandarin- and Russian-speakers constituted the largest

linguistic populations in their respective countries. Their numbers gave them the ability to spread through the country, sometimes with the government's support; the Soviet government encouraged Russian-speakers to move to the Baltic states, and the Chinese government encouraged Han Chinese to move to minority regions such as Xinjiang, Tibet, and the IMAR. The increase in these regions of people who spoke Russian and Chinese created environments where the use of these previously foreign languages became not only practical, but necessary in order to function in government, education, business, and day-to-day life. Much as the migration of so many Han Chinese to the IMAR brought about linguistic Sinicization in that region, so did the migration of Russian- and Chinese-speakers throughout the entirety of the USSR and PRC bring about Russification and Sinicization on a countrywide level.

Soviet and Chinese language policy was initially formed with the intention of building socialist states through the shaping of identity in a way that would separate people from their previous nationalist sentiments and pave the way to the worldwide socialist polity. However, the nationalist elements of language proved to be most powerful in the end. The protection of minority languages ultimately did not serve to reinforce the growth of a socialist supranational identity, but rather strengthened national identities. In order to ensure the development of a unified state, the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China turned their policies down a new path focused on the creation of a national linguistic standard. This started the processes of Russification and Sinicization, marking the end the golden age of national languages which characterized the first decades of the USSR and PRC and bring about linguistic changes that still affect China's autonomous regions and the former Soviet republics grappling with to this day.



## Works Cited

- Bulag, Uradyn E. "Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China". *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 105, No. 4, Special Issue: Language Politics and Practices (Dec., 2003): 753-763. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 January 2014.
- Caodaobateer. "The Use and Development of Mongol and Its Writing Systems in China". *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China*. Ed. Minglang Zhou, Consulting Ed. Hongkai Sun. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004. 289-302. Print.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *Socialism in One Country 1924-1926*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960. Print.
- DeFrancis, John F. *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950. Print.
- Dreyer, June Teufel. "Language Planning for China's Ethnic Minorities". *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 51, No. 3. (Autumn, 1978): 369-383. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 January, 2014.
- Gorham, Michael S. *Speaking in Soviet Tongues*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003. Print.
- Grenoble, Lenore A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003. Print.
- Krueger, John R. "Education in the Mongolian People's Republic". *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3. (Feb., 1961): 183-187. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 January, 2014
- Krueger, John R. "The Impact of Russian and Western Literature on Mongolia". *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring, 1959): 25-34. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 January, 2014.
- Lenin, V.I. "Critical Remarks on the National Question". *Marxists Internet Archive*. 20-45. 2004. Web. 14 October, 2013.
- Lenin, V. I. "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism". *Marxists Internet Archive*. 187-298. 2005. Web. 2 April, 2014
- Martin, Terry. "An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism." *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Ed. Ronald Grigor Suny. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 67-90. Print.
- "Mongolian (монгол)". *Omniglot*. Simon Ager. n.d. Web. 12 February, 2014.
- Ramsey, S. Robert. *The Languages of China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Print.

- Rohsenow, John S. "Fifty Years of Script and Written Language Reform in the PRC: The Genesis of the Language Law of 2001". *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China*. Ed. Minglang Zhou, Consulting Ed. Hongkai Sun. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004. 21-43. Print.
- Rupen, Robert A. "Inside Outer Mongolia". *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 2. January 1959: 328-333. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 January, 2014.
- Rupen, Robert A. "Outer Mongolia Since 1955". *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 4. December 1957: 342-357. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 January, 2014.
- Schwarz, Henry G. "Communist Language Policies for China's Ethnic Minorities: The First Decade". *The China Quarterly*, No. 12 (Oct. - Dec., 1962):170-182. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 January, 2014.
- Serebrennikov, I. I. "A Soviet Satellite: Outer Mongolia Today." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 3. (Apr., 1931): 510-515. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 January, 2014.
- Stalin, J. V. "Marxism and the National Question". *Marxists Internet Archive*. n. pag. n.d. Web. 18 February, 2014.
- "The World Factbook: Mongolia". *CIA World Factbook*. n.d. Web. 29 January, 2014.
- Wang, Hui. "Local Forms, Vernacular Dialects, and the War of Resistance Against Japan: The 'National Forms' Debate". *The Politics of Imagining Asia*. Ed. Theodore Hunters. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2011. 95-135. Print.
- "Zhuyin fuhao / Bopomofo (注音符號 / ㄅ ㄆ ㄇ ㄉ)". *Omniglot*. Simon Ager. n.d. Web. 20 December, 2013.